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Strangers and Aliens No Longer: Negotiating Identity and Difference in Ephesians 2

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Issues of identity and difference in the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians have provoked a long history of scholarly debate, particularly around the narrative of Jews and Gentiles becoming “one new humanity out of two” in 2:15, ἵνα τοὺς δύο κτίση ἐν αὐτῷ εἰς ἓνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον.¹ Should one read this passage, 2:11–22, as “an attempt throughout to articulate [the identity of the *ekklēsia*] in relation to Jews and Gentiles in the Roman world,” that reflects “significant engagement with the life and fate of the Jewish people”?² Or does the text “look back on an achieved unity between Jew and Gentile in the Church as the one body” that has left behind “heated struggles with rival groups”?³ Furthermore, how do these identity categories of “Jew” and “Gentile” relate to the theological distinctives of the epistle? While the deutero-Pauline status of the text remains widely accepted, this does not put to rest the question of the text’s overall relationship to Pauline theology. Does the account of a single new humanity in Ephesians represent the apex of development in the ideas of the Pauline school, or does it stand in disjunction to Paul’s original vision?

This paper contends that in order to do justice to the subtlety and complexity of the relationship between Pauline theology and Eph 2:11–22, one must attend not only to categories such as “Jew,” “Gentile,” and “Israel,” but also to another set of identity categories crucial to the narrative logic of the text: the ancient discourse of

¹Eberhard Nestle and Kurt Aland, eds. *Novum Testamentum Graece* (27th ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2001).

²Margaret Y. MacDonald, “The Politics of Identity in Ephesians,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 26 (2004) 420.

³Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (WBC 42; Dallas, Tex.: Word Books, 1982) xcii–xciii.

citizens, strangers and resident-alien. Indeed I shall argue that Ephesians' richly textured use of the category "Gentile" needs to be understood in terms of how the text situates its connotative significance within this ancient discourse that marks a particular *kind* of "otherness" or outsider status. Thus before turning to the text of Ephesians itself, I begin with a brief, more general discussion on the representation of difference and otherness in antiquity.

Representing otherness is a profoundly rhetorical problem, intimately connected to questions of language and politics. In other words, how an individual or a group demarcates difference and talks about that demarcation constitutes a social process, which arises rooted in a context and a network of relationships. As Jonathan Z. Smith points out, "'Otherness' is a matter of relative rather than absolute difference. . . . This is the case because [it] is a relativistic category, inasmuch as it is, necessarily, a term of *interaction*."⁴ According to Smith, the designation of the other always exists in relation to the construction of the self: "[T]he real urgency of a 'theory of the other' . . . is called forth not by the requirement to place the 'other,' but rather to situate ourselves."⁵ Thus to formulate the other as "other" engages one in a project of self-definition with powerful political and cultural implications.

Greco-Roman antiquity generally and the literature of early Christianity more specifically used numerous categories and rhetorical options to represent and to classify alterity. We focus here, however, on the aforementioned strand of the language of resident-alien status and citizenship within ancient Christian discourse that appears in Ephesians. We focus here on the aforementioned strand within ancient Christian discourse that appears in Ephesians—the language of resident-alien status and citizenship. Thus terms that we see in Ephesians such as *πάροικος* "resident alien," *ξένος* "stranger-foreigner," and *πολιτεία* "citizenship" (along with other key terms like *παρεπίδημος* "sojourner") together form a linguistic complex that early Christians used to demarcate difference, to define identity, and otherwise to contribute to projects of persuasion.⁶ Clearly this linguistic complex converses in some sense with traditions found in the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint,⁷ as well as with streams in Platonic thought that depict the human soul as an alien and a

⁴Jonathan Z. Smith, "What a Difference a Difference Makes," in *To See Ourselves As Others See Us: Christians, Jews, "Others" in Late Antiquity* (ed. Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1985) 15 (emphasis added).

⁵Smith, "What a Difference," 47.

⁶These definitions are commonly accepted but can be found in both H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, H. S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (9th ed., Oxford, 1996); *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (ed. Frederick William Danker, based on Walter Bauer's *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch*; 3d ed.; Chicago, 2000).

⁷See for example, 1 Chr 29:15: "For we are all resident-alien (*gērîm*, *πάροικοι*) before you [i.e., LORD, *YHWH*, *κύριε*] and sojourners (*tôšābîm*, *παροικοῦντες*), like all our fathers; as a shadow are our days on earth"; also Ps 39:12//MT 39:13. This and all translations of ancient material are my own unless otherwise noted.

stranger on earth.⁸ I do not want, however, to trace a possible tradition history but rather to examine the *functions* of this language as deployed in early Christian texts. (For convenience, this paper refers to this complex of terms as “alien rhetoric” or “the alien-stranger topos.”)

The most common use of this rhetoric in Christian texts of the first and second centuries *valorizes* the alien-stranger topos explicitly for the purposes of individual and communal identity construction.⁹ Thus 1 Peter, Hebrews, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, and the *Epistle to Diognetus* appropriate a category of otherness and outsider status to do the work of identity formation. They thereby paradoxically use a language of alterity to construct a powerful notion of insidership that reinforces and maintains identity.¹⁰ In other words, we see in these texts a move to talk about Christians as outsiders as a way of underscoring the distinctiveness of Christian identity and of justifying the existence of Christians as a distinct group. Scholars have debated whether the use of this alien-stranger rhetoric reflects Christians’ technical legal status in the Roman Empire as resident-alien (an argument made especially strongly by John Elliott with respect to 1 Peter)¹¹ or whether the alien-stranger topos functions instead as a metaphor coming out of a background of persecution. According to the latter reading, early Christians speak about themselves as strangers and aliens in response to a reduction in social status upon conversion and draw on metaphors of “sojourning in the world” from the

⁸See for example, Plutarch, *Moralia*, 7.607 (trans. Phillip H. de Lacy and Benedict Einarson; LCL; 16 vols.; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959) 7:564–71.

⁹This move to valorization or constructing the self as “other” is part of a larger dynamic within the Hellenistic cultural landscape. Drawing on Platonic ideals, philosophers such as Philo and Plutarch depict the human soul as a sojourner on earth that seeks its true fatherland in heaven. In early Jewish texts, we see the gradual development of the term *gēr* (sojourner) within the Hebrew Bible from a purely legal usage to what José Ramírez Kidd has termed a *figura theologica*, applied to collective Israelite identity. As Kidd notes, “this metaphorical use of the term played a fundamental role in Israel’s understanding of its fundamental vocation. The Israelites not only kept alive the memory of their forefathers as [*gērîm*], but also understood their own existence as *peregrinato*.” José E. Ramírez Kidd, *Alterity and Identity in Israel: The “gēr” in the Old Testament* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999) 132. For Kidd, the key to this gradual theological development is Israel’s own physical experience of Babylonian exile. Here his reconstruction is dependent upon a particular source-critical framework for dating layers within the Pentateuch. However, regardless of potential ways one might critique this reconstruction, Kidd’s basic point about the function of alien rhetoric in Hebrew Bible texts (as well as the Septuagint) remains convincing.

¹⁰See 1 Pet 1:1, 1:17, 2:11; Heb 11:8–16, 13:12–14; *Shepherd of Hermas*, *Similitude*, 1 (trans. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers* 2, LCL); *Diognetus*, 5–6 (ibid.). Here I am indebted conceptually to Laurence Moore’s fascinating study of a similar dynamic in nineteenth and twentieth century America. See R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

¹¹See John H. Elliott, “1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy: A Discussion with David Balch,” in *Perspectives on 1 Peter* (ed. Charles H. Talbert; NABPR Special Studies Series 9; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1986) 61–78; idem, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 37b; New York: Doubleday, 2000); idem, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981).

Septuagint and from Hellenistic philosophy to make constructive meaning out of a difficult situation.¹²

To my mind, both positions have their merits and do not mutually exclude one another. Indeed each one no doubt applied in varying degrees, possibly overlapping, to *some* early Christians across Asia Minor and other parts of the Roman world. At the same time, however, we should not miss the rich rhetorical and strategic dimensions whereby the alien-stranger topos could function to construct Christian identity in diverse ways. Indeed a close examination of the kinds of rhetorical work that the language of alien status does with regard to the formation of Christian identity in texts of the first and second centuries reveals a complex situation. Alien rhetoric in early Christianity did not, in fact, function as a fixed and univocal response to some singular external situation, such as being marginalized by the surrounding Roman society. Rather it served as a versatile rhetorical resource that early Christians could use for the purposes of identity formation in strikingly different ways—with respect to both internal self-definition and the external situating of Christian identity within the vast range of social, philosophical, and cultic identities and practices that proliferated in the Roman world.

Furthermore, the claim to be an outsider is not necessarily always a transparent one. So for example, in 1 Peter and Hebrews, we see that each text juxtaposes a strong outsider rhetoric alongside a more conventional ethical paraenesis, which thereby marks Christian identity as distinctive while actually reinscribing the place of Christians in Roman society. Thus the text of Hebrews in chapter 11 constructs a kind of “usable social identity”¹³ for its Christian audience that advocates the radical distinctiveness of Christians’ identity as strangers and sojourners but in chapter 13 maintains the value of traditional Greco-Roman mores.¹⁴

But turning back to Ephesians, we can see that constructing the Christian self as other or outsider was not the only game in town with respect to the use of alien rhetoric at the end of the first century. Not all Christians in this period were using this rhetoric to claim resident-alien identity as a means of marking Christian distinctiveness on the ancient cultural landscape. Because the “self-as-other” is a fundamentally *relational* category, in the sense that stranger status always occurs in relation to something or someone else, one can just as easily disavow it as claim or appropriate it. In fact we see exactly this in Ephesians, which puts the language

¹²See as representative: Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996); Reinhard Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde. Die Metapher der Fremde in der antiken Welt, im Urchristentum und im 1. Petrusbrief* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1992); idem, “The ‘Nation’ of Strangers: Social Contempt and its Theological Interpretation in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity,” in *Ethnicity and the Bible* (ed. M. G. Brett; Leiden: Brill, 1996) 247–70.

¹³See Moore, *Religious Outsiders*, 46.

¹⁴For a somewhat differently inflected perspective on this tension in the literature of early Christianity more broadly, see Rowan Greer’s discussion of the “marvelous paradox” in Rowan A. Greer, “Alien Citizens: A Marvellous Paradox,” in *Civitas: Religious Interpretations of the City* (ed. Peter S. Hawkins; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1986) 39–56.

of alien and stranger identity to a very different use and maintains that the text's addressees are *no longer* strangers and aliens but something else besides. As Eph 2: 19–20 asserts,

So then you are no longer strangers and resident-aliens but instead you are fellow-citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.

¹⁹ ἄρα οὖν οὐκέτι ἐστὲ ξένοι καὶ πάροικοι, ἀλλὰ ἐστὲ συμπολίται τῶν ἁγίων καὶ οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ, ²⁰ ἐποικοδομηθέντες ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν, ὅντος ἀκρογωνιαίου αὐτοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.

Here questions of Christian distinctiveness and identity are no less paramount than in the texts referenced earlier. Yet Ephesians uses the alien-stranger topos to approach Christian difference in a different way from other uses of the topos (i.e., valorizing ones) in the same time period. At least one interpreter (Lyall) has explained this incongruity in terms of divergent authorial circumstances. As this argument goes, the author of Ephesians talks about Christian identity as citizenship, because the tradition considered Paul a Roman citizen.¹⁵ The authors of 1 Peter and Hebrews, however, probably did not have Roman citizenship and therefore conceptualized Christian identity in resident-alien terms.¹⁶ Conclusions in this vein assume a direct link between a text's rhetoric of citizenship or alien status and the legal status of its author, an overly facile move between rhetoric and social reconstruction that proves historically unsustainable.¹⁷ Thus rather than trying to explain Ephesians' disavowal of alien identity as a reflection of "Paul's" putative citizen status, I wish to focus instead on the distinctive way in which Ephesians uses the resident-alien topos as part of a larger rhetorical project, which engages in a complex narrative representation of difference and its significance in order to link legitimate Christian identity to a particular vision of unity in the church.

■ 'No longer strangers': The Use of Alien Rhetoric in Ephesians

Thus we come to the key passage for this inquiry: Eph 2:11–22. Here the deployment of alien rhetoric functions not to valorize the self as other but rather as a useful means for thinking about how cultural multiplicity becomes unity or even singularity. Furthermore, as I shall argue, it also works to make the basic rhetorical

¹⁵See Acts 16:37–38, 22:25–29.

¹⁶Paul's reference to Christian citizenship in heaven in Phil 3:20 is also used to support this argument. See as representative of this position, Francis Lyall, "Roman Law in the Writings of Paul—Aliens and Citizens," *Evangelical Quarterly* 48 (1976) 3–14. (Note that Lyall views Ephesians as Pauline.)

¹⁷For a recent critique of the historiographical assumptions undergirding this sort of conclusion, see Elizabeth Clark, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).

contours of Pauline theology translatable and compelling to a non-Jewish audience. But first, how does this deployment fit within the larger “space of possibles” (to borrow a term from Pierre Bourdieu)¹⁸ for discursively coding the concept of the alien or stranger during the early centuries of the Common Era? Given the relational and even parasitic nature of the category,¹⁹ we need to begin with the connotations of the term *citizen* (πολίτης), which functioned in antiquity as the insider term that gave the outsider term meaning. The character, politics, and boundaries of Roman citizenship varied according to time and place throughout the Empire. Yet regardless of these historical and geographical shifts, its function as a *category* remains clear: to denote ultimate insider status.²⁰ Even after the Emperor Caracalla’s edict of 212 C.E. granted citizenship to the entire free population, this connotation likely did not shift very much. While politically the “whole world” may have become citizens, the binary opposition of citizen versus foreigner-stranger would have nonetheless remained viable as a socio-rhetorical tool for making meaning and demarcating difference.

In this context, the basic coding of alien rhetoric constructs the profoundly negative realm of the “un-citizen.” As Dio Chrysostom (ca. 40–120 C.E.) tells us, “[t]o the disenfranchised, life seems with good reason not worth living, and many choose death rather than life after losing their citizenship.”²¹ Or as a treatise attributed to the second century C.E. satirist Lucian puts it bluntly, “Sojourning is a disgrace!”²² Lucian’s treatise throughout draws a sharp contrast between true citizens and incoming strangers and characterizes the latter as bastards.²³ These and other examples²⁴ show clearly that the coding of alien rhetoric in the early Roman Empire allowed it to function as a powerful language of reproach for both literal and figurative purposes.

¹⁸For Bourdieu, the space of possibles is the framework shared by cultural actors within a given discursive field that defines the kinds of positionings that are possible at any particular socio-historical moment. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (ed. and introd. Randal Johnson; New York: Columbia University Press, 1993) 179.

¹⁹I use the term “parasitic” here to highlight the connotative dependency of the concept “alien” on its positive counterpart “citizen.” For a fascinating discussion of the historical relationship between the term “parasite” and notions of otherness, see Smith, “What a Difference,” 5–14.

²⁰Adela Yarbro Collins, “Insiders and Outsiders in the Book of Revelation and Its Social Context,” in *To See Ourselves*, 188. Collins’s discussion focuses on the cities of Western Anatolia at the end of the first century C.E. as the context for Revelation, but her point about the function of the citizen category to mark insider status holds true more generally.

²¹Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 66:15 [*I Glor.*] (trans. H. Lamar Crosby; 5 vols.; LCL; 1951) 5:103.

²²Lucian, *Patriae laudatio*, 8.

²³*Ibid.*, 9–10.

²⁴For a figurative usage, see the second century C.E. writing of Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 4.29 (trans. C. R. Haines; LCL; 1953), where alien rhetoric is deployed in the interests of forceful polemic against those who do not recognize and pursue the Stoic emperor’s conception of the unitary rational life: “If the one who does not recognize the things which are in [the cosmos] is an alien (ξένος) in the cosmos, no less an alien is the one who does not recognize the things which are taking place [in it]. He is an exile (φυγάς), the one who flees from civic reason . . . the one who splits off his own soul from that [soul] of rational things which is one” (my translation).

Yet this conclusion can be complexified by an examination of the ways in which the discourse of Roman citizenship and alien-status emerged and functioned within the context of imperial expansion, as well as practices of extending citizenship as the Empire grew. Through a complex historical process from the fourth to first centuries B.C.E., Rome expanded over the Italian peninsula and eventually united Italy politically as a Roman state.²⁵ Throughout this process, the question of multiple and competing citizenships looms large. As Roman citizenship becomes an option, or more often a necessity, for Italian cities, where should one's loyalties lie? We can see one attempt at an answer to this question (taking a particular political and ideological slant) in Cicero's *De legibus*. Here Cicero proclaims the unitary nature of the Roman citizenship in the first century B.C.E. He allows that a man may acknowledge his municipality as a homeland or *patria*, but ultimately, the *patria* of Rome always trumps all others.²⁶ Cicero's rhetoric thus tries to produce the impression of a political reality in which, whatever competing loyalties one may hold, only the citizenship of Rome matters.

The events of these centuries put in place a paradigm of gradual Romanization and acquisition of citizenship that the Romans would hold to throughout the rest of the Republic and into the first two centuries of the empire. Gradually a system emerged in which communities could move up a scale of status. Various grades existed along this scale (*civitas*, *municipium*, *colonia*, etc.), and the Romans could promote communities through petition or as a reward for military service.²⁷ This

²⁵While the origins are obscure, by the fourth century B.C.E., Roman expansion in Italy was proceeding in the context of a group of communities called the Latin League (of which Rome was the most powerful member). Early on Roman tribal colonies and so-called "Latin communities" lived side-by-side and intermixed. Indeed in this period, Roman colonists would leave Rome (and their Roman citizenship) to be part of the development of Latin communities. But in 338, a conflict arose between Rome and the Latin League, ending with the total domination of Rome, the end of the league and the enfranchisement of the Latin communities (but note—not full citizenship). The third and second centuries B.C.E. saw Italy emerge as a patchwork of Latin states as well as *socii* (allies). Through the course of the second century B.C.E., the Romans became increasingly domineering towards the Latin communities and allies, treating them simply as subjects and a source of Italian manpower. Tensions rose and the result was the so-called Social War of 90–88 B.C.E., in which the communities of the Latin name and the allies/*socii* fought against the Romans. The Romans managed to divide their opposition by offering full Roman citizenship/status to the Latin communities, which they immediately accepted. The historical details are unclear, but Rome eventually offered citizenship to the allies as well and Italy became united as a Roman state. See Michael H. Crawford, "Citizenship, Roman," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (ed. Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 334–35; Henrik Mouritsen, *Italian Unification: A Study in Ancient and Modern Historiography* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London, 1998); Peter Riesenbergh, *Citizenship in the Western Tradition: Plato to Rousseau* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992) 71–73; Adrian N. Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship* (2d ed.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973); idem, "The Roman Citizenship: A Survey of Its Development into a World Franchise," *ANRW* 1.2 (1972) 23–58.

²⁶Cicero, *De legibus* 2.2.5 (trans. C. W. Keyes; 29 vols.; LCL; London: William Heinemann, 1928).

²⁷It should be noted that this system of promotion was utilized primarily in the western provinces. However, the possibilities for cultural connotation emerging out of this institutional framework for shifting the civic status of a community would have held across the empire.

system continued through the first two centuries C.E.: as late as the reign of Septimius Severus (193–211 C.E.), communities were still applying to move up to a higher status. But be that as it may, for our purposes, the analytical payoff is this: what is important to note in this historical survey is the emergence of a particular kind of cultural logic—one in which political multiplicity could become a kind of privileged unity under the aegis of an expanding state. Once the possibility for moving from alien-status to citizenship was institutionally and discursively grounded, it provided a culturally compelling rhetorical option for articulating a way in which pluralistic difference could be transformed or disciplined into unity.

Thus the deutero-Pauline author of Ephesians appropriates the connotative possibilities of Roman citizen and alien discourse as a matrix in which to understand the Christ event. As he or she argues in 2:12–13,

[Remember] that you were at that time without Christ, being alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹² ὅτι ἦτε τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ χωρὶς Χριστοῦ, ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, ἐλπίδα μὴ ἔχοντες καὶ ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. ¹³ νυνὶ δὲ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ὑμεῖς οἱ ποτε ὄντες μακρὰν ἐγενήθητε ἐγγὺς ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Here Ephesians 2 understands Christian identity in terms of movement. As 2:19 avers, this is a movement from alien-status to citizenship with the saints and membership in the household of God brought about by the efficaciousness of Christ's death: ¹⁹ ἄρα οὖν οὐκέτι ἐστὲ ξένοι καὶ πάροικοι ἀλλὰ ἐστὲ συμπολίται τῶν ἁγίων καὶ οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ.

But whereas alien status functions as a foundational category of Christian identity in texts like 1 Peter and Hebrews, one should not characterize the deployment of the topos in Ephesians as a simple inversion of this move. We cannot capture the complexity of the situation by simply arguing that in 1 Peter and Hebrews, the Christian as resident-alien constitutes the basic building block for identity, while in Ephesians, the Christian as “no longer resident alien” serves a similar purpose. Rather the situation is decidedly more complicated for two reasons: 1) Ephesians is working with all kinds of identity categories (i.e. saints, sinners, adopted children, children of wrath, to name only a few), and the disavowal of resident-alien identity is only one discursive strand in a very elaborate picture; 2) I would argue that, contra Hebrews and 1 Peter, the stranger-alien designation in Ephesians is not fundamental in and of itself, but rather important insofar as it works to explain and fill out the meaning of an even more basic identity marker—the designation ‘Gentiles’. This becomes clear when we read 2:12 in the context of verses 11 and 12 together:

Therefore remember that formerly you Gentiles in the flesh, those who are called “the uncircumcision” by those who are called “the circumcision” (that

is, one done by human hands in the flesh), [remember] that you were at that time without Christ, being alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

¹¹ Διὸ μνημονεύετε ὅτι ποτὲ ὑμεῖς τὰ ἔθνη ἐν σαρκί, οἱ λεγόμενοι ἀκροβυστία ὑπὸ τῆς λεγομένης περιτομῆς ἐν σαρκὶ χειροποιήτου, ¹² ὅτι ἦτε τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ χωρὶς Χριστοῦ, ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, ἐλπίδα μὴ ἔχοντες καὶ ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ.

Here the key category that we need to examine is not “strangers and aliens” but “Gentiles” (τὰ ἔθνη). At the most basic semantic level, it simply means something like “groups of people who live together” or later “the nations,” but already in the Septuagint and in other pre-Christian works the term often functions with a sense of “nations other than one’s own.”²⁸ As Shaye Cohen points out somewhat tongue-in-cheek, “there are two kinds of people in the world: those who divide the world into two kinds of people, and those who do not.”²⁹ Turning to the undisputed letters of Paul for a moment, we see clearly the struggle of someone who customarily divides the world up into Jews and Gentiles.³⁰ As such, Paul is wrestling with what the Christ-event means for this binary division. Indeed, as the scholarship of the so-called New Perspective has shown us (beginning primarily with Krister Stendahl and developed notably by E. P. Sanders, James Dunn and others), “the ramifications of the Messiah’s arrival for the relation between Jews and Gentiles” is the key issue for Paul, *not* Christ as “the answer to the anguish of a plagued conscience.”³¹ As E. P. Sanders puts it,

The question is not about how many good deeds an individual must present before God to be declared righteous at the judgment, but . . . whether or not Paul’s Gentile converts must accept the Jewish law in order to enter the people of God or to be counted truly members.³²

²⁸See “Gentiles” in Gerald F. Hawthorne et al., eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993) 335. Also “ἔθνος, ἔθνικός” in *TDNT* II, 364–72.

²⁹Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999) 1.

³⁰While the Jew/Gentile binary is the basic division that drives the use of this terminology, we should also note another use of τὰ ἔθνη in New Testament texts. This usage replaces this Jewish “us” term with a Christian “us,” making the Christian/Gentile contrast into the key opposition (in the Pauline literature, see the following examples: 1 Cor 5:1, 12:2, 1 Thess 4:5). In this case τὰ ἔθνη is often translated “pagans” or “unbelievers.”

³¹Krister Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976) 81, 84.

³²E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983) 255. See also Caroline Johnson Hodge, “‘If Sons, Then Heirs’: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in Paul’s Letters” (Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 2002).

Thus letters like Galatians and Romans seek to work out the place of Gentiles in God's covenant plan, focusing on issues of theological and practical concern such as Jew-Gentile relations, circumcision and food laws.

This is what it is all about for Paul: how what happens in Christ overcomes the Jew/Gentile distinction that has historically excluded Gentiles from membership in the people of God (as well as what that means for the practical life of the church in terms of disputes over circumcision and table). But when we turn to Ephesians (deutero-Pauline and thus roughly 30–40 years later), we see none of this concrete concern with the lived practices of Jewish-Gentile integration. A number of scholars have noticed the lack of interest in these issues on the part of Ephesians. As Nils Dahl notes, highlighting the text's surprising lack of anti-Jewish sentiments or warnings about "Judaizing" customs, "the author of Ephesians had a keen interest in the Jewish roots and origin of the church but failed to show any concern for the relationship of his audience to contemporary Jews in or outside the church."³³

With that being the case, my interest here is in the function of the designation "Gentiles" throughout the letter. Some scholars have argued that the usage of this term in Ephesians has an ethnically generic sense of "non-Christians" or "unbelievers"—a usage that replaces the Jewish "us" term, of the Jew/Gentile binary, with a Christian "us," thereby making the Christian/Gentile contrast the key opposition.³⁴ Those who hold to this interpretation for Ephesians generally concede that Eph 2: 11, "you Gentiles in the flesh," indicates an exception, in which the addition of the phrase "in the flesh" (ἐν σαρκί) functions in this one case to mark the ethnically specific meaning of "non-Jews." As Andrew Lincoln points out, however, verses such as Eph 3:1, "this is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for the sake of you Gentiles"; Eph 3:6, "the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel"; and Eph 3:8, "this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ," all clearly seem to use the term τὰ ἔθνη in a way that follows Paul's predominant usage as meaning "non-Jews."³⁵ Thus I follow Lincoln in choosing not to read

³³Nils Alstrup Dahl, *Studies in Ephesians: Introductory Questions, Text- & Edition-Critical Issues, Interpretation of Texts and Themes* (ed. David Hellholm et al.; WUNT 131; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000) 446. For a comparison of Ephesians with Galatians and Romans on this issue, see Andrew T. Lincoln, "The Church and Israel in Ephesians 2," *CBQ* 49 (1987) 619–20. Note that Margaret MacDonald has recently argued against the view of Dahls and others, reading Ephesians as an attempt to negotiate "permeable boundaries and ambiguous categories" among Jews and Christians in the context of resistance to imperial domination under Domitian. See MacDonald, "Politics," 442.

³⁴This way of using the term "Gentile" is common in slightly later Christian texts and is not unknown in the undisputed Pauline literature (although it appears rarely). See 1 Cor 5:1, 12:2; 1 Thess 4:5.

³⁵The qualification "in the flesh" most likely serves to emphasize the physical dimension of the Jew/Gentile distinction, especially insofar as the phrase "in the flesh" is repeated in the second half of v. 11 to characterize "the circumcision . . . done by human hands." See discussion in Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 135.

τὰ ἔθνη in Eph 2:11 as a special exception. Rather I would maintain that when Ephesians talks about Gentiles, it works with a Jew/non-Jew binary and does not make a distinction between Christians and unbelievers.

With that said, I want to note that only Ephesians, of all the letters in the New Testament, explicitly uses terms of direct address to designate its audience as Gentiles³⁶ (with the exception of an aside to the implied audience, or at least a portion of it, in Romans).³⁷ What should we make of this? One standard scholarly hypothesis proposes that Ephesians addresses a congregation of Gentile Christians. This is probably correct, insofar as this form of direct address would not make for particularly compelling rhetoric to an audience full of people who self-identified as Ἰουδαῖοι, “Judeans/Jews,” in one way or another. Many commentators go further. Andrew Lincoln, for instance, argues that an author who “ascribes to Gentiles [in v. 12] deficiencies they would not themselves have recognized, and yet who at the same time distances himself from these distinctions, is likely to have been a Jewish Christian disciple of Paul.”³⁸

While this may or may not be the case, one can push the logic of Lincoln’s point further, beyond the interests of drawing conclusions about the text’s authorship. For it is noteworthy not just that Ephesians 2 “ascribes to Gentiles deficiencies they would not themselves have recognized,” but that it calls its audience “Gentiles” at all. On one level, this quite likely represents an allusion to the prophetic tradition of addressing the ἔθνη as seen in the Septuagint.³⁹ But the question still remains: why would a non-Jewish audience in late first century Asia Minor (or wherever) think of themselves as “Gentiles”?⁴⁰ I answer: they would not. Cultural and religious identity options abounded in antiquity, and one could think in multiple identity categories, oriented around geography, genealogy, cultic practice, philosophical commitments, etc., but from the standpoint of Ephesians’ audience, especially

³⁶In making this claim, I do not mean to ignore scholars who argue that other New Testament texts address Gentiles. For example, Stan Stowers maintains that “the encoded audience [of Romans] . . . is gentiles at Rome who know something about Jewish scripture and Jesus Christ.” See Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994) 21. Rather my point is strictly limited to a particular way of encoding an implied audience—that of second person plural direct address.

³⁷See Rom 11:13; cf. also Rom 1:5, as well as the usage of τὰ ἔθνη in 1 Cor 12:2 to refer to an implied audience’s former status.

³⁸Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 136. Another argument often put forward in support of this position is the presence of shifting pronouns—i.e. the text’s purported tendency “to distinguish between ‘we’ (Jewish Christians associated with the author) and ‘you’ (Gentile recipients of the work; e.g. Eph 1:2).” (Ibid.) A majority of Ephesians’ commentators hold to his position. Indeed Margaret MacDonald goes so far as to characterize Jewish-Christian authorship of Ephesians as a “virtually universal conviction among commentators.” MacDonald, “Politics,” 432.

³⁹See for example, Isa 34:1 (LXX): Προσαγάγετε, ἔθνη. Also Jer 6:18, Joel 4:11 (LXX) as representative.

⁴⁰Current scholarly consensus places Ephesians in Asia Minor. See discussion in Lincoln, *Ephesians*, lxxxi–lxxxiii. However, fixing the text’s provenance definitively is not necessary for the point I wish to make here.

given the text's lack of concern with practical issues of "real" Jews and Gentiles, the Jew/Gentile distinction does not constitute the obvious or necessary difference that makes a difference.⁴¹

Thus we can ask, what work does the category "Gentile" do? What is the significance of the exhortation in 2:11, "Remember that formerly you Gentiles?" Here I would argue that the direct address of the audience as Gentiles serves two main functions. First, it constitutes an implied audience, in all its potential unruly and chaotic diversity of possible identities, as a singular and unified group. Second, it pulls that audience into the discursive orbit of Pauline theology, wherein the categories of Jew and Gentile have such crucial importance.

So how does this work exactly? As a starting point, Louis Althusser's theoretical notion of interpellation or hailing proves helpful. In Althusser's famous formulation, "ideology hails or interpellates individuals as subjects."⁴² Judith Butler has developed and complexified this notion in her work on hate speech and has highlighted the constitutive power of naming, not simply in the action of particular voices (as in Althusser's paradigm), but as an "instrument and mechanism of discourses whose efficacy is irreducible to their moment of enunciation."⁴³ As Butler compellingly argues,

The mark interpellation makes is not descriptive but inaugurative. It seeks to introduce a reality rather than report on an existing one; it accomplishes this introduction through a citation of existing convention. Interpellation is an act of speech whose 'content' is neither true nor false: it does not have description as its primary task. Its purpose is to indicate and establish a subject in subjection, to produce its social contours in space and time.⁴⁴

Virginia Burrus and Daniel Boyarin have recently utilized this Althusser/Butler framework to analyze how the use of injurious names such as "Jew," "heretic," or "pagan" in Christian discourse could actually serve to constitute or to call these respective subjects into existence.⁴⁵ But for our purposes, my concern lies not so much with this fascinating dimension of so-called "hate speech" as with the more general applicability of Butler's theory to the basic act of naming. Thus in Ephesians, hailing or interpellating the implied audience as "Gentiles" becomes a

⁴¹Here I am indebted conceptually to Jonathan Z. Smith and Karen King.

⁴²Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (trans. Ben Brewster; New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971) 175. By ideology, Althusser means "the system of the ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group." This system has a material existence, grounded in "an apparatus, and its practice, or practices." See Althusser, "Ideology," 158, 166.

⁴³Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997) 32.

⁴⁴Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 33–34.

⁴⁵Daniel Boyarin, *Borderlines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) 9–10; Virginia Burrus, "Hailing Zenobia: Anti-Judaism, Trinitarianism, and John Henry Newman," *Culture and Religion* 3 (2002) 163–77.

way for the text to categorize an imagined audience in all its diversity of possible identities as a unity. Or to put it another way, the designation “Gentiles” works to calls Ephesians’ audience into being as a unified subject that the text can address as such. And in the process, the Jew/Gentile difference is mapped as the difference that really counts.

At the same time, Ephesians’ act of interpellation has the effect of pulling the implied audience into a discourse in which the name “Gentile” functions meaningfully—in this case, the discourse of Pauline theology. As discussed earlier, this is a discourse that is concerned first and foremost in its earliest manifestations (i.e., the authentic Paulines) with how Jews *and* Gentiles can share in the covenant promises of God. But how is this theology meaningful in a cultural context that is not significantly determined by the identity categories of Judaism? It is here that Ephesians’ use of stranger and alien language becomes so crucial. Indeed I would argue that the primary function of alien rhetoric in Ephesians is to help make sense of Pauline theology to an audience that is not (and never has been) wrestling with the issues that produced that theology in the first place—“saving Paul for the non-Jewish context,” if you will.

Thus the rhetoric of alien/stranger identity serves to fill out the sense of the designation “Gentile,” making it meaningful for Ephesians’ implied audience. While the Jew-Gentile binary is not the difference that makes a difference except from a Jewish point of view, the alien/citizen distinction is a category that would resonate deeply across the Roman Empire. As we heard from Dio Chrysostom earlier, many would rather die than lose their citizenship. The connotations in play here are powerfully emotive, both socially and politically. And Ephesians marshals this potent sense of resonance to explain why its interpretation of Pauline theology matters—that is, it uses alien and citizen categories to imbue the overcoming of the Jew-Gentile divide with a connotative force meant to be vigorously life-giving.

The larger project here is the construction of Christian identity and the domesticating or disciplining of difference in a very specific way—one which has as its ultimate goal the production of a vision of unity embodied in the church. To this end, Ephesians 2 offers its narrative interpretation of the Christ event—one in which the difference that the text itself has called into being as the only significant difference is then subsequently erased. In other words, Ephesians first constitutes its audience as Gentiles, and then gives that designation meaningful significance using the language of alien status, in order to proclaim triumphantly that this status is no longer the case. As verses 13–15 tell us, Christ’s blood has brought near the strangers who were far off (¹³ νοὺν δὲ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ὑμεῖς οἱ ποτε ὄντες μακρὰν ἐγενήθητε ἐγγὺς ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ). He has made both groups into one by breaking down the dividing wall (perhaps the Jewish law, or more generally the Jew-Gentile boundary).⁴⁶ As v. 15 avers, abolishing the law has allowed an act

⁴⁶Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Ephesians: A Commentary* (trans. Helen Heron; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991) 113. See the discussion of possible parallels in the *Letter of Aristeeas* and Qumran texts in

of new creation, one new humanity out of two, and Ephesians, with all the weight of Pauline authority, characterizes this act of sacrificial abolishment (or violence, depending on your point of view) as εἰρήνη or “peace.” While Ephesians does not use explicitly the language of a third race that became prevalent in second and third century Christian discourse, the logic of the narrative moves in this direction.⁴⁷ In the formulation of J. Z. Smith, “Christianity is neither this nor that, it is some ‘third thing.’”⁴⁸

Ephesians 2 thus presents the rhetorical disciplining of difference on two levels: first, the text draws boundaries that determine which difference matters (i.e., the Jew/Gentile difference) through an act of interpellation; then, it proclaims the erasure of that difference “in one body through the cross” (2:16) and thereby creates a platform to launch a specific vision of unity as embodied in the church. The result is the conclusion of Ephesians 2:19: these Gentiles are “no longer strangers and aliens but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God” (emphasis added). Stranger and alien identity has been replaced by citizenship—all three of these being culturally compelling categories in the late first century C.E. for framing Pauline theology as significant and meaningful in a non-Jewish context. With this replacement in place, the more specifically Pauline identity category of “Gentiles” also becomes superfluous. It has done its work, both to constitute the audience as a unified group and to bring that group into the discourse of Pauline theology. Therefore, having served its purpose, in the text’s logic, it can and should be discarded. So 4:17 in fact exhorts the audience: you must “no longer live as the Gentiles live, in the futility of their mind” (μηκέτι ὑμᾶς περιπατεῖν, καθὼς καὶ τὰ ἔθνη περιπατεῖ ἐν ματαιότητι τοῦ νοῦς αὐτῶν).

What remains in the wake of this disposal of identities? The rhetorical unity of the universal church remains, under the auspices of Pauline theological authority. As 3:10 aptly summarizes, the issue of crucial concern all along has been “that the diversified wisdom of God might now be made known through the church” (ἵνα γνωρισθῇ νῦν . . . διὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἡ πολυποίκιλος σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ). On the other side of this narrative of shifting identities articulated in Ephesians 2,

PHEME PERKINS, *Ephesians* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997) 71–72. Other possibilities for the referent of the “dividing wall” include the Jerusalem temple balustrade separating the Court of the Gentiles from the inner courts or the curtain that cordoned off the Holy of Holies in the temple. See MARKUS BARTH, *Ephesians* (AB 34-34A; 2 vols.; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974) 1:283–87.

⁴⁷On Christianity as a new or third race, see DENISE KIMBER BUELL, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

⁴⁸Jonathan Z. Smith, “Fences and Neighbors: Some Contours of early Judaism,” in *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982) 11. With respect to Ephesians, Lincoln argues, “the Gentiles’ former disadvantages have been reversed not by their being incorporated into Israel, even into a renewed Israel of Jewish Christians, but by their being made members of a new community which transcends the categories of Jew and Gentile, an entity which is a new creation, not simply a merging of the former groupings.” Lincoln, “Church and Israel,” 615.

the audience is no longer strangers, no longer resident-alien, by 4:17 no longer even Gentiles. But they remain a unified subject to be addressed—only now the categorization of that subject has been shifted from “Gentiles” to “the church” or ἐκκλησία, a rhetorical entity powerfully figured throughout the letter in terms of a singular body (see especially 4:4–16). The second half of the text will turn to filling out the shape and contours of this “vision of a unified universal Church,”⁴⁹ a topic that unfortunately cannot be pursued here.⁵⁰

In closing, however, we should note that chapters 4–6 do in fact turn to issues of audience diversity and difference. Unity for Ephesians does not mean the ignoring or erasure of all difference but rather its organization and control. Therefore in chapters 4–6, the text introduces those differences that it will not erase, the differences that are in fact meant to make a difference—specific roles in the church, household code hierarchies of husbands over wives, parents over children, masters over slaves. There is much here that is deeply problematic, and as Clarice Martin has pointed out, much that has “exerted a malefic and far-reaching impact” historically.⁵¹ For our purposes, however, the crucial point remains that by the time one reaches chapters 4–6, the narrative of Ephesians 2 has done its work. Under the unifying umbrella of “the church,” the final chapters of Ephesians need only legitimate specific kinds of difference in the form of a carefully controlled program for community hierarchy and practice.⁵²

■ Conclusion: Thinking Difference Differently

In conclusion, the varied deployments of alien rhetoric in early Christian texts raise important questions for thinking about the politics and representation of Christian identity both in antiquity and today. This analysis has looked closely at Ephesians as an example of one distinctive deployment of that rhetoric. In Ephesians alien rhetoric

⁴⁹Lincoln, *Ephesians*, xciv.

⁵⁰Space does not permit a full-scale critical reading of this overall vision, often lauded by commentators as a noble picture of cultural unity and reconciliation. In this vein, however, I would question Carmen Ubieta’s recent argument that Ephesians exhibits “[t]he dialectics between particularism and universalism through a universalism that respects and integrates plurality and differences,” a balance that Ubieta sees maintained in the early Pauline tradition but later subsumed under an imperialist rhetoric. See Carmen Bernabe Ubieta, “Neither *xenoi* nor *paroikoi*, *sympolitai* and *oikeioi tou theou*’ (Eph 2:19): Pauline Christian Communities: Defining a New Territoriality,” in *Social Scientific Models for Interpreting the Bible* (ed. John J. Pilch; Leiden: Brill, 2001) 279.

⁵¹Clarice J. Martin, “The *Haustafeln* (Household Codes) in African American Biblical Interpretation: ‘Free Slaves’ and ‘Subordinate Women,’” in *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Cain Hope Felder; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991) 206.

⁵²Thus I would disagree with Sarah Tanzer’s conclusion that the household code of Ephesians is a secondary addition that “does not break down dividing walls but rather establishes them and teaches one to live within those hierarchical bounds [and as such] seems to clash fundamentally with a very key theme in Ephesians.” See Sarah Tanzer, “Ephesians,” in *Searching the Scriptures, Volume Two: A Feminist Commentary* (ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Firoenza; New York: Crossroad, 1993) 2:341.

functions as part of a larger project, both to make Pauline theology intelligible to a non-Jewish audience and also to discipline difference and identity in a particular and potentially problematic way. Insofar as this rhetoric plays a part in constituting the text's audience as a unified subject to be addressed (i.e., the universal church), it helps to pave the way for the program of hierarchy and control that follows in chapters 4–6. Thus the text's disavowal of alien status does not lead to a morally unambiguous vision of cultural harmony and reconciliation. Rather the narrative of Ephesians 2 points us to the need for a thorough and reflexive rethinking of what is at stake in the use of this rhetoric (both when valorized or disavowed) to articulate the boundary lines along which early Christian difference/distinctiveness was constructed.

The Loss of Center: Changing Attitudes towards the Temple in Aggadic Literature

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■ The Loss of the Temple

The destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E., and the concurrent loss of formal independence, was arguably the single most fundamental event affecting the future of the Jewish people during the subsequent centuries. The immediate reaction to the destruction of the Temple among the populace was one of despair and a feeling of a “loss of center,” as is evidenced in some of the post-destruction literature.¹ This response was tempered and moderated to a certain degree by the subsequent rabbinic leadership, through moderation of the mourning practices,² institution of

¹See the pseudepigraphical work *2 Baruch*, also known as the *Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch*, written during the years following the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E., 10:6–19; see James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1983) 1:624–25. The author places in the mouth of the Biblical character of Baruch, Jeremiah’s scribe, a bitter lament over the destruction of the Temple, expressing surprise at the continuation of both natural and human life after such a catastrophe. See also *4 Ezra* 10:5–24, *ibid.*, 1:546–47. Cf. Gedaliah Alon, *The Jews in Their Land in the Talmudic Age* (trans. Gershon Levi; 2 vols.; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1980) 1:46–55.

²See *t. Sota* 15:11 (ed. Saul Lieberman, 243–44), *b. B. Bat.* 60b, where Rabbi Joshua highlights the unreasonableness of a total denial of life’s pleasures in the wake of the destruction, and suggests a middle path: “Not to mourn at all is impossible, because the blow has fallen. To mourn overmuch is also impossible . . . [Rather,] a man may whitewash his house, but leave a little bare [. . .] A man may prepare a full banquet, and leave out a small item [. . .] A woman may don all her jewelry, but leave off a small item.”

formal commemoration rituals,³ and the substitution of other forms of worship and religious behavior in the wake of the loss of the Temple rituals.⁴ Nevertheless, the memory of the Temple as a defining element in the Jewish worldview retained a place of importance in post-destruction Jewish literature, in both legal corpora such as the Mishnah,⁵ and non-legal traditions, as exemplified by aggadic tales composed during the first centuries of the Common Era.⁶

However, as time wore on, and as Jewish centers in the Diaspora—particularly, Babylonia—became more important, the attitude to the centrality of the Temple underwent subtle changes. These changes are particularly evident in the retelling of early tales in new historical contexts. In the following analysis of two early Palestinian tales of the destruction, as they are retold in new literary corpora—one story retold in a later Palestinian work, the other resurfacing in the Babylonian Talmud—we shall trace the changing attitudes of the new storytellers to the Temple, as the focus of attention moves from the Temple as center to the increasingly important social, political and religious problems facing the Jewish communities in the periphery.⁷

³Such as those instituted by Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai after the destruction “in remembrance of the Temple,” including the continued use of the *lulav* during the entire week of *Sukkot*, which previously had been limited to the Temple service alone, and the ruling that the priests must remove their sandals before blessing the people, as was done in the Temple. See Alon, *The Jews in Their Land*, 107–18.

⁴These include the appropriation of duties concerning the fixing of the lunar-solar calendar in the academic center of Yavneh, the abolishment of the need to bring fourth-year fruits to Jerusalem (see Alon, *ibid.*), and especially the regulation of fixed prayers. On the latter, see Ezra Fleischer, “On the Beginnings of Obligatory Jewish Prayer,” *Tarbiz* 59 (1990) 397–441 [Hebrew]; *idem*, “The *Shemone Esre*: Its Character, Internal Order, Content and Goals,” *Tarbiz* 62 (1993) 179–223 [Hebrew].

⁵Despite the fact that the Mishnah was finalized at the beginning of the third century C.E., it contains numerous references to Temple ritual as if this ritual were still taking place; see *m. Ber.* 1.1, *Bikkurim* 1, *Pesachim* 5–9, as well as the entire tractates of *Yoma*, *Sheqalim*, *Sota*, *Tamid* and *Middot*. The phrase “May the Temple (or: ‘Your city’) be rebuilt speedily in our days” (*Tamid*, end of ch. 7, and see also the conclusions to *Ta’anit* and *Avot*), was spoken in earnest, with full expectation that the hiatus between the destruction of the Second Temple and its rebuilding would not be much longer than that between the destruction of the First Temple and its rebuilding, i.e., not more than seventy years.

⁶It has become fashionable during recent decades of scholarship to cast serious doubt on the veracity and historical accuracy of rabbinic sources. While this scholarly skepticism has served as an important check against the naïveté of earlier historical studies, I agree with those historians who have argued that, on the whole, the rabbinic data can yield significant insights concerning the worldviews of important segments of the Jewish people during the first centuries of the Common Era, even if, as is certainly the case, many narratives are literary reworkings of historical events. (See the following note.) In any case, I will deal here primarily with narrative texts, and my conclusions should be read as pertaining to the worldview of the authors of these texts, and not necessarily as reflections of the historical events themselves.

⁷As I have been reminded by an anonymous reviewer of this paper, attention should be drawn here to other studies, mostly by historians, concerning the relationship of the Jewish communities living in the peripheries, notably the large Jewish diaspora population in Babylonia, to the center of Jewish life, learning and culture in the Land of Israel. See, as an example, the recent study by Isaiah M. Gafni, *Land, Center and Diaspora: Jewish Constructs in Late Antiquity* (Sheffield: Shef-

■ The Destruction of Bethar: From Center to Periphery

The first story is found in the context of a long collection of stories concerning the fall of Bethar, the stronghold of Bar Kochba destroyed during the revolt of 132–135 C.E., appearing in the Jerusalem Talmud to the Mishnah citing the destruction of Bethar.⁸

Rabbi Yose said: Bethar remained intact fifty-two years after the destruction of the Temple.

Why then was it [ultimately] destroyed? Because its [inhabitants] lit candles after the destruction of the Temple.

Why did they light candles?

The *bouleutai*⁹ of Jerusalem would sit in the center of the city.

When they would see someone coming up to Jerusalem, they would say to him,

“So we have heard that you want to be made *archōnt*¹⁰ or *bouleutēs*?”

And he would reply, “It never crossed my mind.”

“So we have heard that you want to sell your estate?”

And he would reply, “It never crossed my mind.”

And his companion would say to him, “What do you want from him? Write [up a deed], and I will sign.”

And he would write [it up] and his companion would sign,

and they would send the deed to his housekeeper, saying to him,

“If so-and-so comes to his estate, do not let him in, since it is sold to us.”

And when he would hear this from them, he would say,

“I wish I had broken my leg, and had not gone up to Jerusalem.”

This is what is written:

“They hunt our steps [so we could not] walk in our city squares,

Our end is near; our days are done.” (Lam 4:18)

“They hunt (צַד) our steps...” – Make desolate (אַצַּד) the roads to that house!

field Academic Press, 1997), especially his discussion of a narrative appearing in the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmuds (107–17). See also Gafni’s reasoned discussion about the feasibility of using rabbinic materials as sources for Jewish cultural and intellectual history of the rabbinic period (*ibid.*, 14–18); and cf. the additional studies cited in note 34 below.

⁸y. *Ta’anit* 4.8 (Venice ed., 69a).

⁹The *bouleutai* were the elected members of the governing council of the ancient *polis*, and are mentioned in sources of the Second Temple period as existing in Jerusalem, where they are presumably identical with the members of the *sanhedrin*; see Josephus, *Ant.* 20:11, *War* 2:405 (*archontes* and *bouleutai* in charge of levying taxes from the outlying villages!), Luke 23:50 and Mark 15:43. Cf. Gedaliah Alon, *Jews, Judaism and the Classical World* (trans. Israel Abrahams; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1977) 51–52 (and notes 11 and 12 there), and 351–53; idem, *The Jews in Their Land in the Talmudic Age*, 1:78–79, note 64 (where this story is cited); Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (3 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1980) 2:376.

¹⁰The *archontes* are the elected magistrates of the city, and are found along with the *bouleutai*; see previous note. The terminology may reflect a post-destruction reality.

"Our end is near (קָרֵב)" – Bring near (קָרֵב) the end of that house!

"Our days are done (מְלֵא)" – Complete (מְלֵא) the days of that house!

They too did not end up well: "He who rejoices over [another's] misfortune will not go unpunished." (Prov 17:5)

It is important to realize the structure of this passage. It begins with a statement by Rabbi Yose, the second-century sage, about the relatively long period during which Bethar continued to flourish after the destruction of the Temple.¹¹ While having been spared the first period of destruction, its demise is directly related to the attitude of the residents towards the destruction of the Temple: the people "lit candles" after the destruction. This may be understood minimally as an indication of emotional detachment and disregard for the depth of the destruction, or, alternatively, as an active symbol of joy over the destruction of the Temple.¹² It is the second interpretation that is borne out by the subsequent story. This tale, however, does not mention Bethar, and is a general account of conditions in Jerusalem before the destruction of the Temple that caused those non-Jerusalemmites (it does not mention their provenance) who "came up" to Jerusalem (presumably fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *aliyah leregel*, bringing offerings to the Temple) to wish they had never come. That message is brought home through an additional midrash on a verse from Lamentations. The tale and the midrash were not originally an integral part of the statement of Rabbi Yose, as can be seen by the fact that the language of the tale and midrash is Aramaic, betraying a period no earlier than the third century, and also by the final statement: "They too did not end up well." At first this would seem to duplicate the fact implied from Rabbi Yose's statement, that Bethar was indeed destroyed not long after the destruction of the Temple. But in fact this description is of the fate of the non-Jerusalemmites described in the story and midrash, not the people of Bethar; the comment is appended originally to the story, without reference to the framework of Rabbi Yose's statement. The entire passage was then appended onto the original Tannaitic statement as an illustration of those rejoicing over the destruction of the Temple, with the question, "And why did they (the Betharites) light candles?" acting as a bridge between the two sections, precipitating the "flashback" offered now by the tale.

The account itself is told in anecdotal style: It is a fairly detailed anecdote, but the detail, which would seem to relate a single event, is counterbalanced by the constant use of the modal form (הוֹרֵה) indicating continual and repeated action in the past—"the *bouleutai* would sit in the midst of the city, they would see..., they would say to him," etc. As is the case for many aggadic tales, it is told in the context

¹¹Rabbi Yose ben Ḥalafta, the assumed author of the ancient chronological work *Seder Olam*, was especially knowledgeable in historical traditions of the late Second Temple period.

¹²On the lighting of candles as a sign of joy, see *y. Sukkah* 5.1 (55b) and the parallel in *Lam. Rab.* to 1:16 (ed. Solomon Buber, 116).

of a midrashic commentary to a biblical verse, here Lam 4:18: The verse, while using verbs in the past tense, describes a curiously “present” feeling of the end: “They hunt our steps, so that we cannot walk in our streets; our end has neared, our days are fulfilled, for our end has come.” This is reworded in the midrash (through an Aramaic paraphrase of the verse that plays on the form of the verbs) as an imperative: “Destroy the paths to that house (the Temple)!— Bring its end near!—Number its days!” which neatly reflects the feeling of the main protagonist, the one who would “go up” to Jerusalem—obviously for the purpose of visiting the Temple, and who, at the end of the story, regrets that he ever made the pilgrimage: “Would that my leg had broken, and I had never ‘gone up’ to Jerusalem!”¹³ In fact, the tale itself, which begins with the neutral expository sentence, “The *bouleutai* would sit in the midst of the city, and when they would see someone ‘going up’ to Jerusalem,” and ends with the regret, “would that I had not ‘gone up’ to Jerusalem,” is bracketed by these two situations: The story moves from a balanced picture of the relationship between the holy city and the populace of the surrounding countryside—the leaders of Jerusalem are “in the midst” of the city, and those from the outlying areas “go up” to Jerusalem—to a description of severe imbalance: The leaders are not “in the midst” of Jerusalem, but have spread their influence and their possession into the outlying cities, while the villager does not want to “go up” any more to Jerusalem.

The rest of the story explains how this change from a balanced society to an imbalanced one took place. What unfolds in front of our eyes is a series of attempts on the part of the city councilors, gradually increasing in intensity and criminality, to receive some type of benefit from the villager. The first query, “we have heard that you are interested in a leadership position,”¹⁴ may be seen as an attempt at extorting a bribe from the man for the benefit of being appointed to the *boulē*; it is an ironic and satirical reflection on the *bouleutai* themselves, and on how they received their appointments!¹⁵ When this offer is rebuffed, greater pressure is ap-

¹³In the original Aramaic the sentence is formulated in the third person, as is common when characters express self-imprecation.

¹⁴The query is actually skillfully formulated as a declarative sentence, “so we have heard...,” to imply knowledge about which there is no doubt.

¹⁵The undesirability of holding such offices is aptly described in a statement found in *Gen. Rab.* 76.6 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, 904), where the Roman government is characterized as an accomplice in providing incentives for avarice and envy: “[The] wicked state [= Rome] casts an envious eye upon a man’s wealth: “So-and-so is wealthy, let us make him an *archōn*, so-and-so is wealthy, let us make him a *bouleutēs*.” Wealth was indeed both a prerequisite and a necessity for such offices, whose occupants were often required to expend much of their wealth for political ends. See Daniel Sperber, *The City in Roman Palestine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998) 96: “[A]n individual’s affluence was a significant factor in his election to municipal office, the assumption being that he would contribute funds from his private capital for the construction of public buildings or for the financing of their operation.” See also Saul Lieberman, “Palestine in the Third and Fourth Century,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 36 (1946) 346–48. It therefore stands to reason that those already on the council would try to entice other wealthy individuals to join them in sharing the burden of their office.

plied, and this time the stakes seem higher: "We have heard you want to sell your estate." If they cannot receive an outright bribe, they can use their position and power to increase their landed holdings. But when the villager again resists, the plot is hatched to commit forgery, taking advantage of the villager's stay in Jerusalem to steal his property by deceitful means.

The storyteller utilizes a set of wordplays to further clinch his message, which pits the cunning *bouleutai* against the innocent villager: Twice we hear the words "we have heard" in the mouths of the *bouleutai*, both times a lie. Alongside these words we also hear twice "that you want"—also a lie. Through an inversion of these terms, however, the sinister deed is effected, and its consequences felt: In the middle of the story, the friend (presumably of one of the councilors¹⁶) asks, "what do you want from this one," and as a result of that (real!) desire, the villager in the end indeed "hears" from them that he is no longer owner of his estate.

To summarize, we may say that the tale seems to take place in the Jerusalem of pre-destruction days, and can be seen as exemplifying the corruption of the leaders of the holy city, which led to the alienation of the general populace from the Temple. It is not directly connected to Bethar, but has been cited by the redactor of this collection of Bethar traditions, because the depicted alienation seemed to explain well the joy of the Bethar population over the destruction, stated in the introductory statement of Rabbi Yose. Central to the dynamics of the tale is the consequence of the actions of the *bouleutai* of Jerusalem; namely, their increasing hegemony and control—indeed, outright theft—of the property in the villages. The story starts and ends with scenes setting the pilgrim against the *bouleutai*, who displace the pilgrim and move from center to periphery.

The entire collection of tales concerning Bethar in the Palestinian Talmud appears also in the fifth-century Palestinian Midrash to Lamentations, also known as *Lamentations* (or *Echah*) *Rabbati*, appended to Lam 2:2.¹⁷ The parallel to the

¹⁶This interpretation seems more likely than assuming that the "friend" was associated with the villager himself.

¹⁷The verse of Lam 2:2, "The Lord has swallowed up without compassion all the habitations of Jacob," is aptly cited as a comment on the disastrous consequences of the Bar Kokhba revolt. This verse is mentioned in the first passage of the long collection of aggadic sayings and narratives on the destruction of Bethar (and Jerusalem) common to the Talmud and Midrash, thus providing the "hook" upon which the editor of the Midrash could hang the entire collection. Although the collection of tales and sayings is duplicated in the midrashic text, it is clear that the collection as a whole, and each of its individual parts, underwent significant re-editing in its later form. Indeed, I have demonstrated elsewhere the dependence of the traditions of *Lamentations Rabbati* on the earlier Palestinian traditions cited in the Palestinian Talmud, as well as the manner by which the earlier narratives are reworked by the later storytellers/redactors; see Paul Mandel, *The Narrative in Midrash Eicha: Text and Style* (M.A. thesis; Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1982) especially 1:121–45 [Hebrew]; idem, "Between Byzantium and Islam: The Transmission of a Jewish Book in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods," in *Transmitting Jewish Traditions: Orality, Textuality and Cultural Diffusion* (eds. Yaakov Elman and Israel Gershoni; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000) 74–106.

passage cited above is as follows (we delete here the statement of Rabbi Yose at the beginning as well as the midrashic comment at the end, which are similar to the form found in the Talmudic version):¹⁸

The place of the *bouleutai* of Jerusalem was located in the center of the city.

When someone from Bethar would come up to Jerusalem to pray, they would say to him,

"Stay with us, and we shall appoint you [to the office of] an important person."

And he would reply, "I do not want that."

One of them would say to him, "Will you sell me your vineyard? Will you sell me your estate?"

And he would reply, "No."

And his companion would say to him, "Leave him alone. Let him go, and I shall write [up a deed], and sign it."

Upon his departure, he [the *bouleutēs*] would write a deed and go down there [to his estate].

He [the villager] would attempt to enter his vineyard or estate, but he would not let him,

saying, "This is not your vineyard; this is not your estate. I have already purchased it from you."

They would go to the town magistrate (*tav karta*), and he [the *bouleutēs*] would produce the deed.

The town magistrate would say to him [the villager], "What can I do for you? He holds the deed!"

And he would say,

"Would that my leg had broken, and I had not gone up [to Jerusalem] to pray."

And they desisted from going up to pray.

While at first we may suppose this to be a parallel version, perhaps just one of many variants of the tale as it traveled through the scholarly and popular circles of third to fifth century Palestine,¹⁹ a closer look at some of the changes in this tale

¹⁸Midrash *Lamentations Rabbati* is known in two textual versions: that of the *textus receptus* of the regular printed editions (deriving from the texts of the first printed editions, *Midrash to the Five Megillot*, Constantinople 1514 [?] and Pesaro [?] 1519), and a manuscript version printed by Solomon Buber, *Midrash Echah Rabbati* (Vilna, 1899). The two versions, while reflecting the same work, vary significantly, neither of them presenting a flawless text; see Mandel, *The Narrative in Midrash Eicha*; idem, *Midrash Lamentations Rabbati—Prolegomenon, and a Critical Edition to the Third Parasha* (Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1997) [Hebrew]. The following translation is based on a comparison of all the manuscript versions of this midrash with the printed versions. In this case neither of the printed versions presents an accurate text, although Buber's text (103), after deleting spurious lines, is close to the version presented here.

¹⁹See Joseph Heinemann, *Aggadot wetoldotehen [Aggadah and Its Development]* (Jerusalem: Bet Hotsa'ah Keter, 1974) on the tendency of aggadic tales to be retold in variant forms, at times

reveal that this is actually a later re-telling of the tale appearing in the Palestinian Talmud.²⁰ As mentioned above, the Talmudic tale seems to give a general depiction of the relationship of the *bouleutai* of Jerusalem to the pilgrims, and does not relate directly to Bethar; it is a secondary citation within the context of the collection of statements on Bethar. But in this story, as part of the very same collection, the pilgrim is identified specifically as being from Bethar: the framework relating to Bethar has worked itself into the warp and woof of the tale, thus cementing the relationship between tale and framework. Moreover, the storyteller here is less interested in preserving the stylistic and linguistic subtleties of the original: Gone are the wordplays on “hear” and “want;” and the three-tiered attack on the villager is couched in more direct terms: “We shall appoint you an important person;” “will you sell me your estate?” The loss of these stylistic subtleties is counterbalanced, however, by a renewed interest in continuing and thickening the plot, by depicting what transpired back in Bethar. We now see the villager actively protesting the illegal confiscation of his property, and he and the councilor (who, in contradistinction to the earlier story, comes himself to take possession of the land) go to the town magistrate of the village of Bethar. In a Kafkaesque scene, the villager stands no chance of redressing the wrong done to him in the face of a patently ineffectual local bureaucracy. The significance of this second scene, where the villager encounters the councilor in his own village, is highlighted through a comparison with their first encounter in Jerusalem; indeed, the second scene is, in form, a replica of the first. In both cases the contest between the villager and the greedy *bouleutēs* is resolved by a third party, acting either by willful deceit or in an ambiguously innocent neutral pose: the collaboration of the “friend” in the first part of the story is paralleled by the activity of the *tav karta* of Bethar in the second part. It is not simply the actions of the Jerusalem councilors in expropriating his property that brings this about; the Bethar villager still has enough fight left in him at that point to haul the thief into city hall. It is when he realizes that even his own compatriots will not help him out that he falls into despair, and becomes alienated from the Temple. The new storyteller has refocused our attention on the activity in the periphery, on the local fight.

seemingly the result of inadvertent variants typical of oral versions, and in other instances the result of conscious changes by a subsequent storyteller. See also Avigdor Shinan, “The Aggadic Literature: Written Tradition and Transmission,” *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore* 1 (1981) 44–60 [Hebrew], who suggests that the variant versions in the aggadic works may reflect parallel and contemporary oral performances of the text. Here, however, the model of Jonah Fraenkel seems more apt. Fraenkel posits a linear literary development in the narrative poetics of the aggadic tale appearing in earlier and later redacted texts; see “Prominent Trends in the Transmission History of the Text of Aggadic Narratives,” *The Aggadic Narrative: Harmony of Form and Content* (Tel Aviv, 2001) 51–74 [Hebrew] = *Proceedings of the Seventh World Congress of Jewish Studies*. Vol. 3: Studies in the Talmud, Halacha and Midrash (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1981) 45–69 [Hebrew].

²⁰See note 17 above.

This refocus directs our attention away from Jerusalem as the center of the tale: Our secondary author, in accenting the local scene as a mirror of the original scene of deception, clearly calls into question the actions of the village leadership. Without branding these actions the result of conscious deceit (indeed, our author refrains from explicitly branding any of his characters), the storyteller intimates that the *tav karta* is a partner to the crime. Whereas the previous author quite clearly describes a scene from pre-destruction Jerusalem, our author is more willing to distance himself from that period. This is evident in a seemingly small variant in the phrase appearing in the beginning and end of the tale: “A person from Bethar would go up to pray,” and “Would that my leg had broken, and (I) had not gone up to pray” (not “to Jerusalem,” as in the first story!). Although destroyed and partially desolate, Jerusalem continued to be the center for prayer for Jews throughout the first centuries of the Common Era; and indeed, there exist a number of tales concerning second and third century Rabbis who, it is told, “went up to Jerusalem to pray.”²¹ Since that is the predominant activity in Jerusalem in the post-destruction period, our author—either consciously or unconsciously—contextualizes the tale in his contemporary period. We are moved away from the immediacy of the Temple as a place for sacrifice, as the center for all Jews from the countryside to move to, and our attention is directed towards the periphery itself, where the corruption perpetrated by the city official is at the very least tolerated by a spineless local leadership, or, perhaps, in an even more sinister intimation, where the crime of deceit is consciously mirrored on the local level.

■ Kamza and Bar Kamza: National Conflict and Rabbinic Indictment

We now turn to another story describing the reasons for the destruction of the Temple, this one a well-known tale, albeit usually told in its Babylonian version, to which we shall turn after first reading the version found in Midrash *Lamentations Rabbati*.²² In this case we have no earlier parallel Palestinian version, and therefore must use the version in the Midrash as a starting point. However, as shall be seen, we may, with some degree of certainty, peel away accretions of the later

²¹See on Rabbi Jonathan (*Gen. Rab.* 32.10 [ed. Theodor-Albeck, 296], and Rabbi Ishmael ben Rabbi Yose (*Gen. Rab.* 81.3 [974])—both lived near the end of the second century C.E. Cf. Shemuel Safrai, “Pilgrimage to Jerusalem after the Destruction of the Second Temple,” *Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period: Abraham Schalit Memorial Volume* (ed. Aharon Oppenheimer, Uriel Rapoport, and Menahem Stern; Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1980) 376–93 [Hebrew].

²²See Paul Mandel, “Tales of the Destruction of the Temple: Between the Land of Israel and Babylonia,” *Center and Diaspora: The Land of Israel and the Diaspora in the Second Temple, Mishna and Talmud Periods* (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 2004) 141–58 [Hebrew], where the story is analyzed against the background of the question of the historical character of Rabbi Zechariah ben Avkulos. See also Jeffrey L. Rubenstein, *Talmudic Stories: Narrative Art, Composition, and Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999) 139–55, 163–64.

redaction of this text, arriving at what may have been the early Palestinian form of the tale. The following is the version of the tale as found in an early *geniza* fragment of the midrash, which presents a better text than that found in the known printed editions.²³

A tale is told of one of the wealthy men of Jerusalem who made a banquet, inviting everyone.

He said to his servant, "Go and bring me my friend, Bar Kamza."

He went and brought him his enemy, Bar Kamzora.

He entered [the banquet] and found him sitting among the guests.

He said to him, "Get up and get out of here."

He replied, "I will pay the cost of the meal; but don't throw me out in shame."

He said to him, "You have no choice but to get out of here."

He replied, "I will pay the cost of the entire banquet; but don't throw me out in shame."

He said to him, "You have no choice but to get out of here."

He replied, "I will pay double [the cost of the banquet]; but don't throw me out in shame."

He said to him, "You have no choice but to get out of here."

Rabbi Zechariah ben Avqulos was present; and although he had the ability to protest, he did not protest.

Upon leaving, he said, "Shall I get thrown out in shame and let them sit there in peace?!"

He went down to the king, and said to him,

"Those sacrifices that you send them—they eat them."

He rebuked him, saying, "That is slanderous; you wish to denigrate them."

He said to him, "Send the sacrifices with me, and send along a trustworthy man, and you shall find out the truth."

He sent a trustworthy man with him along with the sacrifices.

He [Bar Kamzora] arose at night and placed unnoticeable blemishes on [the sacrifices].

When the priest saw them, he did not offer them as sacrifice, saying,

"I cannot offer them [now]; tomorrow I will offer them."

A day went by, and he did not offer them; another day went by, and he did not offer them.

Directly he [the messenger] sent word to the king, "What that Jew told you is true."

Immediately he sent [an army] to destroy the Temple.

This is what people say, "Between Kamza and Kamzora was the sanctuary destroyed."

²³The fragment, Cambridge University Library, Taylor-Schechter series, C1 folio 69, was published by Zvi M. Rabinovitz, *Ginzé Midrash* (Tel-Aviv: Chaim Rosenberg School for Jewish Studies, 1976) 144–54. The following translation is based on my transcription of the actual fragment; my readings vary in several places from those of Rabinovitz. In some places I have corrected the text, based on a comparison to the other versions.

Rabbi Yose said, "The timidity (*anvetanut*) of Rabbi Zechariah ben Avkulos burned down the Temple."

Historians have tried to connect the names and elements of this tale to certain accounts of the major revolt preceding the destruction of the Second Temple as found in the writings of Josephus.²⁴ Thus Josephus writes that in 66 C.E. the *segar* or *sar habira*, the 'captain of the Temple,' who happened to be the son of the High Priest, succeeded in persuading the officers of the Temple not to accept any foreign sacrifices. Since the times of Augustus, a twice-daily sacrifice had been offered in the name of the emperor (and paid for by him); Josephus demonstrably states that the cessation of foreign sacrifices laid the foundation of the war with the Romans, "for the sacrifices offered on behalf of that nation and the emperor were in consequence rejected."²⁵ Josephus also mentions a priest named Zechariah son of Amphikallus who acted as head of the party of Zealots, and whose deliberations and later actions significantly contributed to the continuation of the revolt and the subsequent destruction.²⁶ And finally he mentions a Jew named Compsus ben Compsus, who acted as head of the 'peace' faction of the city of Tiberias in the Galilee, and who recommended that the city continue its allegiance to the Romans and the emperor.²⁷ It is possible that a more historically correct version of the parabolic statement, mentioned as the etymon of the story about Bar Kamza, decried the actions of a 'peace-lover' like Compsus ben Compsus as precipitating the destruction of the Temple; this admittedly strange name became misunderstood by later generations as the names of two individuals, who then became the protagonists of the banquet story. A similar statement by the opposite political faction (to which Josephus ascribes in his writings) may have blamed the priest Zechariah for being unnecessarily belligerent, thus ultimately causing the destruction of the Temple.²⁸ This

²⁴See the brief discussion by Yitzhak Baer, "Jerusalem in the Times of the Great Revolt," *Zion* 36 (1971) 169–71 [Hebrew], and the references there.

²⁵*War* 2:409; cf. *ibid.* 2:197, *Against Apion* 2:77.

²⁶*War* 4:226.

²⁷Josephus, *Vita* 33. Cf. Joseph Derenbourg, *Essai sur l'histoire et la géographie de la Palestine* (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1867) 267.

²⁸On the question of the identification of the Zechariah mentioned by Josephus with the rabbinic Zechariah mentioned in this story, see: Isaak Marcus Jost, *Geschichte der Israeliten seit der Zeit der Maccabäer bis auf unsre Tage* (10 vols; Berlin: Schlesingerschen, 1821) 2:99, note 14; Heinrich Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden* 3/2 (ed. Marcus Brann; Leipzig: Leiner, 1906⁵) 820–22, note 29; Baer, "Jerusalem in the Times of the Great Revolt." For a recent discussion of this topic, including an analysis of the character of the rabbinic Zechariah, see: David Rokéach, "Zechariah ben Avkules: Humility or Zealotry?," *Zion* 53 (1988) 53–56 [Hebrew]; Daniel R. Schwartz, "More on 'Zechariah ben Avkules: Humility or Zealotry?'" *Zion* 53 (1988) 313–16 [Hebrew]; David Rokéach, "Word-Play Nonetheless: A Rejoinder," *ibid.*, 317–22 [Hebrew]. Zechariah ben Avkulos (the patronym meaning "easily satiated" in Greek, which may of course be significant in the context of our tale—see the following note) is mentioned in only one more context in rabbinical sources, as one who would not take sides in a halakhic dispute between Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai; see *t. Shabbat* 16.7 (and cf. *m. Shabbat* 21.3). Rabbi Yose's statement about Zechariah's "humility" being responsible for the destruction of the Temple is also appended to that account. While most

would then account for the (ironic) statement concerning Zechariah's "humility" causing the destruction of the Temple.²⁹

But whatever the historical origins of our story we shall see that, in its present state (after a small correction), the storyteller has created a tale of subtle, nuanced political understanding. But first it should be noted that the presence of Rabbi Zechariah at the banquet, while providing an interesting and sharp barb, is not dealt with or related in the rest of the story, except for the final statement, which 'doubles' the first appended statement concerning the cause of the destruction of the Temple. Moreover, its placement interrupts the narrative flow (note the following sentence: "Upon leaving he said," clearly referring to Bar Kamzora mentioned before the line about Rabbi Zechariah), and is the only line in the tale in Hebrew, the rest of the tale told in Palestinian Aramaic.³⁰ Since the final statement by Rabbi Yose appears *verbatim* in a halakhic context in an earlier tannaitic work, Tosefta,³¹ it would seem that this appendix influenced a later redactor to include a mention of Rabbi Zechariah in the tale itself. Thus, the original Amoraic tale is not about Rabbi Zechariah, and does not mention his presence at the banquet.

The tale presents a series of ethical mistakes or bad judgments, each of which, had it been avoided, would have stopped the not inevitable process leading to Rome's sack of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. But a closer look at the structure of the story reveals greater subtlety: We notice that the first part of the story, in which Bar Kamzora pleads three times to remain in the banquet hall and eat—each time his plea being rejected—is paralleled in the final section of the tale by the thrice-refused offer of the blemished animal by the representative of the Roman emperor. Indeed, this parallel is an inversion: While the guest wishes to eat and is rebuffed, the Roman representative—also a 'guest' at the Temple—wishes, as it were, to feed his sacrifice.³² Both rejections lead to a desire for revenge. In

scholars and commentators assume that Rabbi Yose is referring obliquely to our story about Bar Kamza, his comment may also have arisen as a hyperbolic statement decrying Zechariah's abstinence and diffidence in halakhic matters, which was then later incorporated into an already known tale about the reasons for the destruction. See our discussion below, and see Mandel, "Tales of the Destruction of the Temple."

²⁹If Zechariah's name was indeed known as *ben eukolos* = "easy-going," "diffident," then the mention of the *avetanut* ("diffidence") of a zealot with such a name would, of course, be doubly ironic. See Schwartz, "More on 'Zechariah ben Avkules: Humility or Zealotry?'" 313. The matter is complicated, though, by the fact that Zechariah's actions, at least in the Tosefta and midrashic versions, although reflecting an improper response in the dramatic contexts, may be interpreted as truly diffident and non-combative. This may be the result of a secondary use of the original, historically related statement. As will be seen, the exact significance of this statement is not crucial to an understanding of the two tales about (Bar) Kamza.

³⁰The first line also appears in Hebrew, but it is a common phenomenon that a tale told in Aramaic begins with Hebrew. The presence of a line in Hebrew in the middle of the tale, however, is a clear sign of an addition.

³¹See note 28 above.

³²The motif of eating/feeding is one that appears in all three parts of the tale, with Bar Kamzora introducing the idea of the sacrifices as food (for the Jews instead of for the deity) in the second section. (I thank an anonymous reviewer of this paper for drawing my attention to this point.)

both cases, we can imagine that the conflict was exacerbated by an atmosphere of mutual distrust: While we know that Bar Kamzora was invited by mistake, his presence at the party must have been understood by the host as a deliberate affront; Bar Kamzora, on his part, could arguably have come to the conclusion that the host deliberately invited him to the banquet in order to publicly humiliate him.³³ This mistrust then initiated subsequent actions and reactions, leading ultimately to the destruction.

But while the first half of the story moves from an express hatred between two individuals—the host and Bar Kamzora—which, through distrust and misunderstandings, leads to revenge, the second half moves in the opposite direction. We are told, in the important middle section, that Rome and Israel are, in fact, in a state of relative mutual harmony: The Jews offer sacrifices in the name of Rome, and the Roman emperor clearly has no reason to believe Bar Kamzora's slander at first: "You are insulting them, just wishing to slander them!" Only the mistrust between the two peoples—so typical of individual pettiness—turns this balanced reciprocity into blind hatred and destruction of the weaker by the more powerful.

By setting up individual conflict as a paradigm for national conflict, our author has personalized our understanding of the international scene: The Temple, originally a symbol of mutual acceptance, trust and peace, becomes the locus of and, indeed, the catalyst for the national stand-off. On the one side stands the representative of Rome, on the other, the priest. The sacrifice, meant to be a vehicle for bringing a person closer to God and to one's fellow human beings, is not offered, thus breaking the ties that bind nations together despite widely diverging origins, customs and ranks. The destruction of the Temple is the stated and (now) inevitable result of such a break.

As I have surmised, this is the story which circulated in Palestine of, perhaps, the third or fourth century C.E., before a later editor brought in an earlier, known tradition of Rabbi Zechariah's timidity being responsible for the destruction of the Temple, and on the basis of that tradition included him among the guests at the banquet. This Palestinian tradition, as told by the redactors of *Midrash Lam-tations Rabbati* (including mention of Rabbi Zechariah), then traveled—as did many other Palestinian statements and traditions—in the mouths of scholars who moved frequently between the two great centers of Jewish learning, in Palestine and Babylonia.³⁴ And so we find the tale told in the Babylonian Talmud—now

³³See the aggadic commentary of Rabbi Samuel Eliezer Halevi Edels (*Maharsha*) to *b. Git.* 55b, who suggests that Bar Kamza (in the Babylonian version) would have understood the invitation to the banquet as an attempt at reconciliation; his eviction from the banquet would then have come all the more as an affront.

³⁴It is well-known that the Babylonian Talmud contains numerous parallels to Palestinian traditions occurring in the Palestinian Talmud and the early midrashic collections (almost all of Palestinian provenance). Especially in the case of narratives and traditions describing persons and events originating in the Land of Israel, these traditions often become modified in the Babylonian versions. For a recent comparative study of narratives in the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmuds,

recast in the Eastern, Babylonian dialect of Aramaic—as part of a trilogy of tales of destruction;³⁵ and here we find that Rabbi Zechariah has become quite securely ensconced in our text, without any possibility of deleting the reference to him:³⁶

On account of Kamza and Bar Kamza was Jerusalem destroyed.

There was a man whose friend was Kamza, and whose enemy was Bar Kamza.

He made a banquet, and said to his servant, “Go and bring me Kamza.”

He went and brought him Bar Kamza.

He came and saw him sitting there, and said to him,

“Since you are my enemy, what are you looking for here? Get out!”

He said to him, “Since I am already here, let me alone, and I shall pay you for what I eat and drink.”

He replied, “No.”

He said to him, “I shall pay you half the cost of the banquet.” He replied, “No.”

He said to him, “I shall pay you the entire cost of the banquet.” He replied, “No.”

He picked him up and threw him out.

He said, “Since those Rabbis were sitting there and did not protest, I shall go and slander them.”

He went and said to the king, “The Jews have revolted against you!”

He said, “How can this be proven?”

He said, “Send them a sacrifice, and see if they will offer it.”

He sent with him a three-year-old calf.

On the way he placed a blemish on the lip (some say, the eyelid)
—a place which is a blemish for us, but not for them.

The Rabbis considered offering it as a sacrifice for the peace of the kingdom.

see Rubenstein, *Talmudic Stories*, and the bibliographical references mentioned there. See also Joshua Efron, “Bar-Kokhva in the Light of the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmudic Traditions,” in *The Bar-Kokhva Revolt: A New Approach* (eds. Aharon Oppenheimer and Uriel Rappaport; Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1984) 47–105 [Hebrew], for a detailed comparative analysis of the Palestinian and Babylonian historical traditions concerning the Bar-Kokhba revolt, including a discussion of the methodological and historical ramifications of the study; and cf. Gafni, *Land, Center and Diaspora*, 108–17. The present analysis comes to similar conclusions to those presented by these scholars regarding the evolution of historical narrative accounts from the Palestinian to the Babylonian redacted works. It should be noted that, for the present comparative study, we need not posit a direct literary connection between *Lamentations Rabbati* and the Babylonian Talmud (a moot issue); the narrative appearing in *Lamentations Rabbati* is a representative of the Palestinian narrative tradition, and can be assumed to have circulated some time before the redaction of this midrash in the fifth or sixth century C.E. From the inclusion of Rabbi Zechariah ben Avkulos in the Babylonian version we may infer that the tale in its later form was the one that circulated in Babylonia, resulting ultimately in the narrative as found in the Babylonian Talmud.

³⁵See note 40 below on the formal connection between these three tales as found in the Babylonian Talmud.

³⁶*b. Git.* 55b–56a. The text is based on a comparison of the manuscript versions; see Meyer S. Feldblum, *Dikdukei Soferim: Gittin* (New York: Horeb, 1966).

Rabbi Zechariah ben Avqulos said to them, "They will say, 'Blemished animals are [permitted] to be offered on the altar'!"

They considered killing him, so that he should not go and tell.

Rabbi Zechariah ben Avqulos said to them, "They will say, 'He who puts a blemish on a sacrificial animal deserves the death penalty'!"

Rabbi Yohanan said, "The timidity of Rabbi Zechariah ben Avqulos destroyed our house, burned our Temple, and exiled us from our land."

Note that while the first part of the story is essentially the same as the Palestinian version, the Babylonian author has given up on mirroring the altercation at the banquet in a description of the conflict at the Temple. In fact, he has completely rewritten the second half of the story, and, instead of the two august representatives of the two peoples, the priest and the Roman representative, the main disputants here are Rabbi Zechariah and the Rabbis: Rabbi Zechariah, who, as surmised above, had already made his appearance at the banquet in the (late) edited Palestinian version, is now taken out of that scene and placed in the court of the Temple; in his stead, those very same Rabbis are seated, and they are equally silent and passive in the face of the embarrassing and uncomfortable spectacle. But their passivity in the presence of ethical shortcomings at the banquet gives way in the Temple scene to brazen assertiveness in matters of ritual law and polity: They are willing either to sacrifice the blemished animal, or, alternatively (and with seemingly equal aplomb), to kill the dangerous collaborator Bar Kamza. Their plans are thwarted by an equally assertive Rabbi Zechariah,³⁷ whose arguments are couched in the legal language of a halakhist, but with an absurd twist: His fears are that these one-time actions, taken at a time of need, will become dangerous legal precedents. Indeed, "they will say" is used frequently in the Babylonian Talmud as an explanation for certain (ritual) practices and decisions, which if not followed would lead ignorant people to wrong halakhic conclusions.³⁸ But here this legal reasoning is brought to absurd conclusions: As opposed to the finely nuanced distinctions which characterize the regular usage of the term, the danger of anyone making improper "halakhic"

³⁷It is only here that his actions are truly assertive, thus producing a biting irony regarding his "diffidence" (*anvetanut*) in the appended statement. While it has been suggested that here, too, Zechariah abstains from taking a position (similar to the accounts in the Tosefta and *Lamentations Rabbati*), and is "diffident" vis-à-vis public criticism (see the commentary of Rashi to the Talmud *ad loc.*, and see Schwartz, "More on 'Zecharia ben Avkules: Humility or Zealotry?'" 314–15), an analysis of the use of "they will say" in other places in the Babylonian Talmud leads to the conclusion that the force of this idiom is the fear that improper halakhic conclusions will be reached by the lay populace, and not the fear of popular criticism. See the following note.

³⁸Cf. *b. Shabb.* 108b, *Eruv.* 24b, 91a, *Pesach.* 37a, *Moed Kat.* 11a, *Git* 18a, and *Hul.* 76b. As an example we may cite the passage in *b. Shabbat*, where the Mishnaic ruling forbids the production of brine in large quantities for pickling purposes (the preparation of foods being forbidden on the Sabbath), but allows small quantities for table use. Rabbi Yose objects to this distinction, however, on the grounds that "they will say, work of major proportions is prohibited, but work of minor proportions is permitted." The phrase thus introduces the fear of a possible false conclusion drawn by the populace from a halakhic ruling. So too here, Rabbi Zechariah's objections to the halakhic

inferences in such momentous decisions seems patently ridiculous. Rabbi Zechariah seems hopelessly out of touch with reality and real people, as are the Rabbis, whose active stance in the Temple precinct is ironically pitted against the moral bankruptcy which they exhibited at the banquet in the face of moral indignation and personal degradation. The final comment about Rabbi Zechariah's meekness which summarizes our story becomes an ironic, satirical statement: The "meekness" of this "Avkulos" is indeed only a cover for a misplaced zeal.

Where is the Temple in all this? Indeed, this story does not even explicitly mention the destruction of the Temple by the Roman emperor, as did the Palestinian version; in fact, we have completely forgotten about Rome (there is no Roman representative present at the Temple, as Bar Kamza brings the animal himself), as well as any mention about a priest. The Temple recedes into the background, as the disputing Rabbis take center stage. For this is not a story about international conflict, about Rome and Israel, but about the Jewish rabbinic leadership and its misplaced emphases. The story becomes a test case for moral leadership, and the rabbis, as depicted by this author, fail in that test as they bring legal reasoning to new heights of absurdity.

Of course, this is exactly what we would expect as the focusing interest of a sensitive Babylonian leader and reader: For these Easterners, residing over a thousand miles away from the Palestinian Jewish-Roman conflict and lacking a living tradition of the Temple destroyed hundreds of years before, lived in a highly structured society, where the academies, the rabbinic leadership, and the exilarch were the unquestioned spokesmen and leaders of the community.³⁹ Their concern need not have been directly with the central, national conflicts between Rome and Israel, but rather could focus instead on the mettle of their rabbinic leaders. In the hands of the Babylonian storyteller the tale thus becomes a biting indictment of the leaders themselves, even if that indictment is translated onto the leadership of another time and place.

ruling proposed by his colleagues is based on a fear that the ruling (not necessarily wrong itself) might lead to faulty legal conclusions on the part of the populace.

³⁹See Jacob Neusner, *A History of the Jews in Babylonia* (vol. 3 [of 5]: From Shapur I to Shapur II; Leiden: Brill, 1968) ch. 4 ("The Rabbinical Academy and Popular Culture"), 195–271, ch. 5 ("The Rabbinical Court and Daily Life") 272–338; idem, *Talmudic Judaism in Sassanian Babylonia: Essays and Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 1976) ch. 7 ("The Rabbi and the Jewish Community") 87–107; Isaiah M. Gafni, *The Jews of Babylonia in the Talmudic Era: A Social and Cultural History* (Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar le-toldot Yisrael, 1990) ch. 3 ("Jewish Life in Talmudic Babylonia: National Leadership and Local Communal Structures") 92–125, esp. 101–2, 113–15 [Hebrew]; idem, "'Staff and Legislator': On New Types of Leadership in the Talmudic Era in the Land of Israel and in Babylonia," in *Priesthood and Monarchy: Studies in the Historical Relationships of Religions and State* (ed. Isaiah Gafni and Gabriel Motzkin; Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar le-toldot Yisrael, 1987) 79–91 [Hebrew]; idem, *Land, Center and Diaspora*, 17–18, 108–20; Richard Kalmin, "Relationships Between Rabbis and Non-Rabbis in Rabbinic Literature of Late Antiquity," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 5 (1998) 156–70.

But it would be a mistake to believe that national conflict does not interest these authors. For, indeed, while the national conflict is taken out of the Temple court, the stage for such national mistrust as depicted in the Palestinian story is reset in another, altogether different setting. The last two stories in the Babylonian trilogy, which have no parallel in Palestinian sources, seem to have been expressly created to fill the void left by the absence of the national conflict in the retelling of the Kamza and bar Kamza tale.⁴⁰

On account of a rooster and a hen was Tur Malka destroyed.
 They had the custom that when a groom and bride were married,
 they would send out in front of them a rooster and a hen, as if to say, "Be
 fruitful as the fowl."
 One day Roman troops passed by, and took them from them.
 They attacked them, striking [and killing] them.
 They came and told the king, "The Jews have revolted against you!"
 He rose against them.

On account of a carriage axle was Bethar destroyed.
 They had the custom that when a baby boy was born they would plant a
 cedar,
 when a baby girl was born they would plant an acacia tree;
 and when they would marry, they would cut these down and make a wedding
 chamber for them.
 One day the king's daughter passed by. The carriage axle broke,
 and they cut down a cedar and inserted it [in the carriage].
 They attacked them, striking [and killing] them.
 They came and told the king, "The Jews have revolted against you!"
 He rose against them.

These stories are actually twins, and present two sides of one coin. The one story tells of young men and women who, upon marrying, are greeted by fowl to symbolize the soon-to-become family with children. These young people and their guests are bothered by what is perhaps an overly boisterous, maybe even sneering, group of other young men, Roman soldiers. The questionably innocent prank of the soldiers is taken very seriously by the popular village crowd, and their mistrust is matched by the exaggerated misreading by the emperor, leading to their siege and ultimate destruction.

In the second story a complementary picture is drawn: Young children are symbolically set up with a botanical "trust fund" (here the flora complements the

⁴⁰*b. Git. 57a*. These two small tales, while embedded in the context of other tales of destruction and separated from each other and from the tale of Kamza and Bar Kamza found on folios 55b–56a, originally formed one unit: this is clear from the introductory phrase on 55b, "On account of Kamza and Bar Kamza was Jerusalem destroyed; on account of a rooster and a hen was Tur Malka destroyed; on account of a carriage axle was Bethar destroyed," as well as from the occurrence of the phrase, "The Jews have revolted against you" (*meradu bakh yehudaei*) in all three tales. I therefore feel justified in imputing a commonness of purpose in the formation of the three tales.

fauna of the first story). This fund is liquidated by what seems to be a quite innocent mistake concerning another child, the emperor's daughter. Again, mutual misunderstanding and distrust lead to attack and counterattack, and ultimately to the destruction of Bethar. In both cases, the natural, pastoral, continuation of life for the local, village population—from childhood to adulthood and back again—is threatened and effectively cut off by the very same elements of the surrounding, dominating power.

In a fascinating mirroring of the development of our first tale, which took us away from an early depiction of Jerusalem and the Temple as political and religious center towards a new focus on the village (the same Bethar!) and its leadership in a late Palestinian tale (of the fourth or fifth century C.E.), our second Palestinian story of national conflict is similarly transformed in the Babylonian milieu into a story of local conflict, where the centrality of the Temple gives way to a dual view of the problems of religious and political leadership on the one hand, and, on the other, popular village life and its conflicts with a more diffuse, almost innocent—but equally dangerous—foreign domination. Instead of depicting the stand-off between the representatives of the two nations in the Temple, the international conflict is relocated to the village, indeed, to the most primary elements of village life. The sensitive depiction of the national crisis as a projection of private conflict, hatred and distrust inherent in the Palestinian tale is here transformed into an equally sensitive, but widely divergent description of the complex relationship between the foreign ruling power (the army and the emperor) and the populace. Neither element, ruler or ruled, is portrayed in unambiguous hues: the message imparted through these small stories consists of a warning to the local population of the dangers of living under occupation of a sometimes benign, sometimes threatening power, and the necessities of accommodating to the unpleasant and not altogether innocent demands and capriciousness of the wielders of that power.

■ The Loss of Center

The loss of the Temple as a center (through its destruction) was not an immediate and complete loss, as long as it lived on in the collective memory of the Jewish people as a symbol of the centrality and fragility of moral leadership, and as a representation of the great national conflict between Israel and Rome. What we have seen is how chronological and geographic distance from the Temple caused the centrality of the Temple, and the memories of the rituals of sacrifice so central in its day, to recede, so to be replaced by the more immediate concerns of the populace and its leaders: the political and moral temper of the local leadership, the continuation of life under what should be a leadership equally concerned with the wider questions of law and ritual as with the more personal concerns of the individual in his daily life, and, finally, the trials and tragedy of a subjugated class living without center, but with its own sense of the continuation of life's most basic elements, through custom and group identity. It is significant that the storytellers of the two major

geographic centers of Jewish life provide divergent perceptions of the move from center to periphery: While the Palestinian redactor focuses on a description of the general social fabric of society in its myriad interactions (landowners and bankers, city councilors and mayors, representatives of the king and Temple priests), the Babylonian author divides his focus of attention, here providing an invective of rabbinic activity through a veritable parody of halakhic discourse, and there painting an idyllic, if tragic, picture of popular “village” life.⁴¹ This loss of center - from the centrality of the Temple to the realities of the peripheries—is a second loss, but one which sustained the Jewish people through generations of retold tales.

⁴¹It is worth pointing out that the three stories of Palestinian provenance—both versions of the tale concerning Bethar, and the (restored original) tale of Bar Kamza and Bar Kamzora in *Lamentations Rabbati*—do not involve any members of the so-called “rabbinic” class. While all of these tales appear in Amoraic texts (edited in final form no earlier than the last half of the fourth century C.E.), they may, of course, reflect much more ancient traditions. Recent studies of the Jewish society of the first centuries after the destruction of the Second Temple have suggested that the rabbinic society may have had a much smaller influence than previously assumed on the general Jewish populace, which included landowners, city councilors, artisans and peasants who did not necessarily view the rabbinic class as their leaders. (See the recent account of Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001] ch. 3 [“Rabbis and Patriarchs on the Margins”], 103–28, and see, *ibid.*, 129–76, and especially, on the city councils, 140–142, 175–176; see the literature cited there, *passim*, and especially Shaye J.D. Cohen, “The Place of the Rabbi in Jewish Society of the Second Century,” *The Galilee in Late Antiquity* [ed. Lee I. Levine; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1992] 157–73.) In this context it is interesting to note that the Palestinian tales, even as they are transmitted within rabbinic circles, preserve what may be an authentic “non-rabbinic” flavor. (The interpolation in the tale of Bar Kamza and Bar Kamzora, placing Rabbi Zechariah ben Avqulos at the scene of the banquet, simply puts into relief the attempt to introduce rabbis into a decidedly non-rabbinic tale!) As mentioned above, it is only in the Babylonian version of the Kamza and Bar Kamza tale that the rabbis attain center stage in a drama concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple that, paradoxically, omits specific reference to the Temple and its priests, and only obliquely mentions its destruction. See Kalmin, “Relations Between Rabbis and Non-Rabbis,” on the difference in depictions of the relationships between rabbis and non-rabbis in Palestinian and Babylonian rabbinic literature.

Creatio ex Nihilo Theology in *Genesis Rabbah* in Light of Christian Exegesis*

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“The Ways that Never Parted” is the title of a recently published collection of articles that reflects an increasing tendency in scholarship.¹ A significant number of scholars no longer interpret the emergence of Christianity from Judaism as a clear separation between the two religions either at the end of the first or the beginning of the second century. Instead, they envision a prolonged process which, according to some, may even have lasted until the late fourth century.² This process is thought to have been shaped by both segregation and rapprochement, creating ambiguity and “fuzziness” rather than clear boundaries.³ A central notion is the idea of sororal relations between Judaism and Christianity. These scholars no longer see

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¹Adam H. Becker and Annette Y. Reed, eds., *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 95; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2003).

²Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) esp. 4–5, 89–90.

³See also Martin Goodman, “Modeling the ‘Parting of the Ways’,” in *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (ed. Adam H. Becker and Annette Y. Reed; Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 95; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2003) 121–29;

Judaism as the mother figure giving birth to the daughter religion, while remaining unchanged herself, but rather as a sister developing and changing during the first centuries of the Christian era.⁴ This interpretation then sees Jews as an integral part of the Roman Empire, which eventually became Christian and (im)posed certain religious challenges.⁵

In light of this new approach I wish to examine whether rabbinic interpreters of Gen 1:1–2 were familiar with Christian exegesis and if so, how they engaged with it. Before presenting a detailed analysis of the relevant texts, I will make a few introductory clarifications, beginning by outlining my general understanding of the issues. This can best be done by distinguishing my views from those expressed in the most recent monograph on the topic, Daniel Boyarin's *Border Lines*. While agreeing with the author's effort to interpret emerging rabbinic Judaism in the context of early Christianity, I cannot accept his broad conclusion that "until the end of the fourth century . . . Judaism and Christianity were phenomenologically indistinguishable as entities . . ." (89). Differences, it seems to me, were not only running internally through each of the two groups, as he suggests, but significantly also between them.⁶ Looking at the parting of the ways from a Jewish point of view, it is clear that an awareness of difference dawned at an early stage. Long before rabbinic scholars commented on the "Minim," thus perhaps sometimes referring to Christians,⁷ an anonymous Hellenistic Jew, quoted by Celsus, made succinct

Judith M. Lieu, "'The Parting of the Ways': Theological Construct or Historical Reality?" *JSNT* 56 (1994) 101–19; eadem, *Neither Jew Nor Greek? Constructing Early Christianity* (London: T&T Clark, 2002) 11–30; Guy G. Stroumsa, "Religious Dynamics between Christians and Jews in Late Antiquity" in *Cambridge History of Christianity 300–600* (eds. W. Loehr and F. Norris; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

⁴See esp. Yehuda Liebes, "Mazmiah Qeren Yeshu'ah" [in Hebrew], *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 3 (1983–4) 313–48; Israel J. Yuval, "Two Nations In Your Womb," in *Perceptions of Jews and Christians* [in Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Am Oved Publishers, 2000); Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B.C.E. to 64 C.E.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Daniel Boyarin, "A Tale of Two Synods: Nicea, Javneh und Ecclesiology," *Exemplaria* 12 (2000) 21–62; for Jacob Neusner, see below. Cf. the more cautious approach of Marc Hirshman, *A Rivalry of Genius: Jewish and Christian Biblical Interpretation in Late Antiquity* (Albany N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1996), and idem, "Polemic Literary Units in the Classical Midrashim and Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho," *JQR* 83 (1993) 369–84, who tends to point to the independent ways of each exegetical tradition or to their polemical engagement; David Rokeah, *Jews, Pagans and Christians in Conflict* (Jerusalem-Leiden: Magnes Press and Brill, 1982) esp. 40–83, who argues that Jews related to Christianity only in order to reject it.

⁵Recently, Amram Tropper, *Wisdom, Politics, and Historiography: Tractate Avot in the Context of the Greco-Roman Near-East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), has most forcefully argued for the Greco-Roman context of *Pirque Avot* and its editors.

⁶This view was presented in greater detail at a colloquium with Daniel Boyarin on his book, organized by Galit Hasan-Rokem at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (January 2005).

⁷Reuben Kimmelman, "Birkat Ha-Minim and the Lack of Evidence for an Anti-Christian Jewish Prayer in Late Antiquity," in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition* (ed. E. P. Sanders et al; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981) 2:226–44; Martin Goodman, "The Function of Minim in Early Rabbinic Judaism," in *Geschichte-Tradition-Reflexion. Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag*

statements about the new religion.⁸ Writing probably in the early second century in Alexandria, he mocked the story of the virgin birth, suggesting that it was nothing but a cover for Mary's extramarital relations.⁹ Celsus's Jew also said to the Christians, "Thousands will refute Jesus by asserting that the prophecies which were applied to him were actually spoken of themselves."¹⁰ This statement suggests clear boundaries between Jews and the followers of Jesus, who wrongly applied certain prophecies to their spiritual leader. Celsus's Jew conveys the feeling that an injustice has been done to his religion. Ancient Jewish traditions were abused when the new movement recruited them for its own purposes:

Why do you on the one hand trace your origins to our holy things, and then in the course of time dishonour them, while on the other hand you cannot claim any other origin for your teaching than our law? (*Cels.* 2:4)¹¹

Distinct boundaries are constructed in this passage. As far as Celsus's Jew is concerned, anyone truly accepting the holy things and the law of the Jews belongs to "us," while those tracing their origin to Jewish traditions, though in reality dishonoring them, are followers of Jesus. Celsus's Jew looks back to a deep breach. "You have rejected," he says, "the law of our fathers."¹² This reaction is hardly surprising. From early on Christians defined themselves in relation to Mosaic law and Jewish traditions.¹³ Already in the writings of Paul the theme of exemption from the law for pagan Christians plays a central role.¹⁴ The tendency to construct Christian identity in relation to Jews and Judaism increased with the emergence of

(ed. Herbert Cancik, Hermann Lichtenberger and Peter Schäfer; 3 vols.; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1996) 1:501–10; Philip S. Alexander, "'The Parting of the Ways' from the Perspective of Rabbinic Judaism," in *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways A.D. 70–135* (ed. James D. G. Dunn; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) 1–25.

⁸Celsus's Jewish sources have not been sufficiently studied, but in the meantime see Hans Bietenhard, *Caesarea, Origenes und die Juden* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1974) 42–47; Robert L. Wilken, *The Christians as The Romans Saw Them* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984) 112–17.

⁹*Cels.* 1:28 πλασαμένον αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐκ παρθένου γένεσιν (quotations according to ed. Marcovich 2001; transl. by H. Chadwick with emendations).

¹⁰Τινὲς δὲ καὶ ἐλέγχουσιν . . . μυριοὶ τὸν Ἰησοῦν φάσκοντες περὶ ἑαυτῶν ταῦτα εἰρησθαι ἅπερ περὶ ἐκείνου ἐπροφητεύετο (*Cels.* 1:57). See also the rhetorical question in *Cels.* 1:57.

¹¹Ἡ πῶς ἄρχεσθε μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν ἡμετέρων ἱερῶν προιόντες δὲ αὐτὰ ἀτιμάζετε οὐκ ἔχοντες ἄλλήν ἀρχὴν εἰπεῖν τοῦ δόγματος ἢ τὸν ἡμέτερον νόμον.

¹²ἀπέστητε τοῦ πατρὶου νόμου (*Cels.* 2:4).

¹³See esp. Judith M. Lieu, *Image and Reality: The Jews in the World of the Christians in the Second Century* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996); eadem, "History and Theology in Christian Views of Judaism," in *The Jews Among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire* (ed. eadem et al., London: Routledge, 1992) 79–96.

¹⁴Rom 2:28–9, 9:1–11:23; Gal 5:2; Phil 3:2–11. The literature on this topic is vast and cannot possibly all be quoted here. Suffice it to mention two different approaches, one sociological, the other philosophical: Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles: A Sociological Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) esp. 23–48; Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "Paul's Necessity" in *Beyond "Reception": Judaism, Christianity and Antique Culture* (ed. Anders L. Jacobsen, David Brakke and Jörg Ullrich; Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity 1; Basel: Peter Lang, forthcoming).

orthodoxy, amounting to a special legislation on the Jews in the Christian empire.¹⁵ Given the nature of much of Christian rhetoric, Jews could hardly ignore the difference which prominent leaders of the new movement claimed.

The christianization of the Roman Empire was a momentous event that ushered in crucial developments and eventually changed the reality of the ancient world. Christian appropriations of ancient traditions and texts were rather offensive and seriously challenged pagans as well as Jews. Ancient cultures could no longer remain the same, but instead reconstituted themselves within the new reality of the Christian empire.¹⁶ While pagans and Jews initially opposed the new religion, they increasingly accepted its reality, eventually turning inwards and collecting their own traditions. Ostensibly turning their back to the Christian regime, they sought to reinforce their own identity from within. Pagan philosophers thus began to define their identity as Greeks around new foundational texts, such as Plato's *Timaeus*, which had never before defined the boundaries of a community.¹⁷ The Platonic creation account assumed a role parallel to the biblical story of creation, stimulating running commentaries and theological discussions of doctrine. A pagan credo or catechism emerged.¹⁸ Some of the new pagan doctrines, however, resembled those of their detested Christian neighbors. Boundaries proved to be permeable.

Jewish accommodations to the new reality of the Christian empire must be understood in this context. Judaism, too, could no longer remain the same, but went

¹⁵I use the term orthodoxy in the sense coined by Walter Bauer's seminal study, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (ed. and trans. Robert A. Kraft; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971; *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum*, 1934), namely, as a reference to a relatively late phenomenon which imposed itself on a great variety of views among early Christians. For a useful survey of the history of Bauer's reception in modern scholarship, see Daniel J. Harrington, "The Reception of Walter Bauer's *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*," *HTR* 73 (1980) 289–98. See also the more recent account by Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 163–80. On the connection between emerging orthodoxy and Christian self-definitions vis-à-vis the Jews, see also Paula Fredriksen, "What Parting of the Ways?" in *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (ed. Adam H. Becker and Annette Y. Reed; Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 95; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2003) 35–63. See also Amnon Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1987); Fergus Millar, "The Jews of the Greco-Roman Diaspora between Paganism and Christianity, AD 312–438," in *The Jews Among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire* (ed. Judith Lieu et al., London: Routledge, 1992) 97–123.

¹⁶See also Seth Schwartz, "Types of Jewish Christian Interaction in Late Antiquity," [in Hebrew] in *Continuity and Renewal. Jews and Judaism in Byzantine-Christian Palestine* (ed. Lee I. Levine; Jerusalem: Dinur Center for the Study of Jewish History, Yad Ben Zvi and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 2004) 343–54, who stressed that interaction and influence are not dependent on friendly relations between the respective parties, but may well take place in a hostile environment.

¹⁷For more details, see Maren R. Niehoff, "Did the *Timaeus* Create a Textual Community?" in *The Dominion of Letters*, (ed. Guy G. Stroumsa and Margalit Finkelberg; Select papers of a conference at the Inst. for Advanced Study of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, July 2005, forthcoming).

¹⁸Gilbert Murray, *Five Stages of Greek Religion* (2nd ed.; New York: Doubleday, 1955) 171.

through significant changes. As the church established itself and created a new religious atmosphere, Christian influence had to be reckoned with, and Christian assumptions may gradually have permeated into Judaism as they did into pagan culture.¹⁹ Certain Jewish positions may have emerged in reaction to developments on the Christian side.

My second introductory clarification pertains to my choice of topic and sources. I shall focus on the interpretations of Gen 1:1–2, because the story of creation is shared by Jews and Christians without having provoked overt polemics, as in the case of Sarah and Hagar. Moreover, in contrast to the issue of circumcision, we hear in Christian sources no rhetoric against contemporary Jewish positions.²⁰ Origen, for example, formulated his views on the creation mainly in works composed either wholly or mostly in Alexandria, while virtually ignoring this topic in his later sermons when also addressing Jews and circles close to them.²¹ Creation was thus no special issue in Origen's relations with his Jewish environment in Caesarea.²² On the other hand, Christian thinkers in the second and third century began to formulate a *creatio ex nihilo* theology that eventually became a central part of the Christian credo. While this doctrine was initially formulated in view of Greek philosophy and religious groups usually identified as gnostic, it became a dominant and pervasive view among Christian writers.²³ Pagans reacted by unani-

¹⁹See also Martin Goodman, "Palestinian Rabbis and the Conversion of Constantine to Christianity," in *The Talmud Yerushalmi and Greco-Roman Culture* (ed. Peter Schäfer and Catherine Hezser; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2000) 2:1–9. Goodman suggests that such permeation may have taken place despite the fact that the rabbis did not even explicitly refer to such events as Constantine's conversion. For a particular case study, see Martin Goodman, *Mission and Conversion: Proselytizing in the Religious History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

²⁰See Maren R. Niehoff, "Circumcision as a Marker of Identity: Philo, Origen and the Rabbis on Gen. 17:1–14," *JSQ* 10 (2003) 102–14.

²¹*Princ.* 2, 1:1–4; 2, 3:6; 2, 9:1–4; 3, 5:1–3; 4, 4:4–7, on which see Monique Alexandre, "Le statut des questions concernant la matière dans le Peri Archon" in *Origeniana: Premier Colloque International des études origéniennes* (ed. Henri Crouzel et al., Bari: Instituto Letteratura Cristiana Antica, 1975) 64–81; *Comm. Gen.* (ed. Migne, *Patrologiae Graecae* XII). Concerning the chronological and geographical framework of these two works, see Joseph W. Trigg, *Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third-Century Church* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1983) 89–94. See also Ruth A. Clements, "Origen's *Hexapla* and Christian-Jewish Encounter in the Second and Third Centuries," in *Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success in Caesarea Maritima* (ed. Terence L. Donaldson; Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000) 303–329; Marie-Anne Vannier, "Origène et Augustin: interprètes de la création," in *Origeniana Sexta: Origen and the Bible* (ed. Alain Le Boulluec; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1995) 729.

²²On Origen's contacts with Jews, see the seminal study by Nicolas R. M. de Lange, *Origen and the Jews: Studies in Jewish-Christian Relations in Third-Century Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), who, however, does not examine these contacts from a Jewish point of view.

²³Gerhard May, *Schöpfung aus dem Nichts. Die Entstehung der Lehre von der Creatio ex Nihilo* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1978); Hans-Friedrich Weiss, *Untersuchungen zur Kosmologie des hellenistischen und palästinischen Judentums* (TUGAL 97; Berlin: Akademie, 1966). On the problems of defining the category "Gnosticism", see Karen L. King, *What is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003) esp. 5–19, 218–36; Michael A. Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosti-*

mous insistence on the Aristotelian notion of an eternal cosmos that was never created.²⁴ It is likely that Jews also encountered the *creatio ex nihilo* theology. We have to examine how they reacted: did they adopt a similar approach as their pagan neighbors or, rather, did their commitment to the biblical creation account prompt them to adopt different strategies?

The main rabbinic source I will consider in this article is *Genesis Rabbah* (*GR*), the first extant compilation of interpretations on the whole book of Genesis, redacted in the early fifth century C.E., possibly in Caesarea.²⁵ This midrash is of particular interest, because many of its contributors, such as Rabbi Hoshaya, were active in Caesarea when Christian exegesis flourished there under the leadership of Origen.²⁶ Moreover, this midrash is famous for its great amount of Greek loanwords indicating close contacts with its Hellenistic environment. Regarding notions of creation, *GR* is especially important. Menahem Kahana has shown that its redactor took a particular interest in the first verses of the book of Genesis, carefully rearranging the available exegetical material with a view to both the recurrence of the number six and the refutation of interpretations held by "Minim."²⁷ Moreover, this midrash

cism." *An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) 26–53; Robert M. Wilson, "Gnosticism," in *Religious Diversity in the Greco-Roman World: A Survey of Recent Scholarship* (ed. Dan Cohn-Sherlok and John M. Court; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) 164–81.

²⁴See esp. Salustius, *About the Gods and the World* chap. 7 (Engl. transl by Murray, *Five Stages* 197–8); Porphyry and Iamblichus *apud* Proclus, *In Plat.Tim.* 1:382. For a detailed interpretation of these texts in the context of Christianity, see Niehoff, "Did the *Timaeus* Create a Textual Community?"

²⁵Marc Hirschman, "Reflections on the Aggada of Caesarea," in *Caesarea Maritima: A Retrospective after Two Millennia* (ed. Avner Raban and Kenneth G. Holum; Leiden: Brill, 1996) 469–475, rightly stressed that the academic study of Palestinian Midrashim is still in its infancy. While tractates of the Jerusalem Talmud have been historically analyzed, an equivalent study of the Midrashic sources is still an urgent desideratum. An important step in this direction has nevertheless been made by the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, esp. Maier Lerner, *Anlage und Quellen des Bereschit Rabba* (Berlin: Julius Benjamin, 1882), who argued that the original layer of the Midrash is a continuous, literal commentary on the biblical book, while haggadic expansions were added later. See also the important analysis of the sources of *GR* by Hanoch Albeck, "Introduction to Bereschit Rabba," [in Hebrew] in *Bereschit Rabba mit kritischem Apparat und Kommentar* (Jerusalem: 1965) 3:44–89. Cf. also Hans-Jürgen Becker, *Die großen rabbinischen Sammelwerke Palästinas* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1999), who suggested a somewhat deconstructionist approach, claiming that no distinct corpus of text can be identified beyond the variants in the manuscript tradition. The criticism of this position by Chaim Milikowsky, "On the Formation and Transmission of Bereshit Rabba and the Yerushalmi: Questions of Redaction, Text-Criticism and Literary Relationship," *JQR* 92, 3–4 (2002) 521–67, is highly justified.

²⁶Lee I. Levine, *Caesarea under Roman Rule* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), esp. 88; Irving M. Levey, "Caesarea and the Jews," in *The Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima* (ed. Charles T. Fritsch; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975) 1:57–9.

²⁷Menachem Kahana, "Interweaving Six: On the Arrangement of the Parasha 'In the Beginning God Created' in the Midrash Genesis Rabbah," [in Hebrew] forthcoming in *Yonah Frankel Festschrift*. See also Ophra Meir, "A Garden in Eden – Remarks on the Way of Redaction in Genesis Rabbah," [in Hebrew] *Daphim le-mechkar be-sifrut* 5–6 (1989) 309–30; eadem, "The Redaction of Genesis Rabba and Leviticus Rabba," [in Hebrew] in *Te'uda XI. Studies in the Aggadic Midrashim*

discusses new questions not attested in earlier Jewish writings. For the first time the issue of pre-existing matter is seriously investigated. Rabban Gamaliel defends a *creatio ex nihilo* theology as if this doctrine were self-evident.

The exegesis in *GR* is particularly striking in view of earlier Jewish positions. Philo, for example, focused on the question, hotly debated in antiquity, whether the cosmos was eternal or created.²⁸ In the wake of an Aristotelian renaissance in Rome, after Sulla had transferred Aristotle's library there, Philo criticized prevalent metaphorical interpretations of the *Timaeus*, arguing that Plato had meant his creation story literally.²⁹ On this reconstruction, which was shared by Plutarch and Atticus as well as some eminent modern scholars, the cosmos in the *Timaeus* was created out of pre-existing matter and in the image of an ideal model.³⁰ It was destined to last forever. Inferior stuff was transformed into the best possible world, Plato insisted, because the demiurge was good and lacked any sense of envy.³¹ Therefore he looked to a perfect as well as unchanging model when creating the cosmos, and took providential care of his creation.³² Philo wholeheartedly accepted Platonic cosmology, suggesting that the same holds true for the Torah as well. In his view, Moses described the cosmos as having been created in virtually the same

(ed. Meron B. Lerner and Mordechai A. Friedman; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1996) 61–90, who showed the editor's impact on the composition of other *Parashot* in *GR*.

²⁸On the debate see esp. Matthias Baltes, *Die Weltentstehung des Timaios nach den antiken Interpreten* (Leiden: Brill, 1976); David T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato* (Leiden: Brill, 1986) 32–58.

²⁹For more details, see Maren R. Niehoff, "Philo's Contribution to Contemporary Alexandrian Metaphysics" in *Beyond "Reception": Judaism, Christianity and Antique Culture* (ed. Anders L. Jacobsen, David Brakke and Jörg Ullrich; Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity 1; Basel: Peter Lang, forthcoming); Runia, *Philo and the Timaeus*; idem, *Philo of Alexandria: On the Cosmos of the World according to Moses. Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series 1; Leiden: Brill, 2001), esp. 156–173; cf. Gregory Sterling, "Creatio Temporalis, Aeterna vel Continua? An Analysis of the Thought of Philo of Alexandria," *StPhA* 4 (1992) 15–41.

³⁰*Tim.* 27d–28a, 29e–30a. Regarding Plutarch and Atticus, see Niehoff, "Philo's Contribution"; regarding modern scholars arguing for a literal meaning of the *Timaeus*, see esp. Gregory Vlastos, "Creation in the *Timaeus*: Is It a Fiction?" in *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics* (ed. Reginald E. Allen; London: Routledge, 1956) 401–19; Robert Hackforth, "Plato's Cosmogony (*Timaeus* 27dff)," *CQ* N.S. 9 (1959) 17–22; cf. Francis M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology* (London: Routledge, 1937) 24–27; Arye Finkelberg, "Plato's Method in the *Timaeus*," *Am. J. Phil.* 117 (1996) 391–409. According to metaphorical readers of the *Timaeus*, such as those mentioned by Aristotle in *De Caelo* 279b32–280a2 or Taurus in the second century C.E., the cosmos was only said to be created for the "purpose of instruction," meaning that the cosmos is in an eternal state of becoming and change, depending for its nature and persistence on divine benevolence. On this reconstruction matter was not created by God, but existed permanently. The precise place of the pre-cosmic material within Plato's overall system is difficult to determine; see Jerry S. Clegg, "Plato's Vision of Chaos," *CQ* N.S. 26 (1976) 52–61.

³¹The creator god is described as ποιητής καὶ πατήρ and as δημιουργός, ἀγαθός (*Tim.* 28c–29a), of whom it is said ἀγαθός ἦν, ἀγαθῷ δὲ οὐδεὶς περὶ οὐδενὸς οὐδέποτε ἐγγίγνεται φθόνος (*Tim.* 29e).

³²In *Tim.* 30c Plato stresses that the world resulted διὰ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ [...] πρόνοιαν.

way: taking an ideal model, God transformed the “passive element, which is in itself without life and without motion”, into “the most perfect masterpiece.”³³ This transformation was brought about by the divine νοῦς and πρόνοια.³⁴ Philo considered the biblical and the Platonic accounts of creation to be so congenial that he claimed Mosaic origins for the ideas later expressed in the *Timaeus* (Aet. 19).

Evidence from other authors confirms that throughout the Second Temple period no explicit *creatio ex nihilo* theology was formulated in Jewish circles. On the contrary, creation ἐξ ἀμόρφου ὕλης is mentioned in the Wisdom of Solomon 11:17. Neither the author of the book of *Jubilees* nor Josephus regarded תהו ובהו (formless void) as a theological problem that required treatment.³⁵ The author of 2 Maccabees, on the other hand, says in passing that “God made them out of things that did not [really] exist.”³⁶ This famous statement, which has often been taken as evidence for an early Jewish notion of *creatio ex nihilo*, rather seems to convey Platonic ontology, suggesting that matter does not belong to the realm of real existence.³⁷ It is in any case striking that the author does not show any awareness of breaking new ground. If he had indeed advocated a revolutionary idea subversive to the biblical creation account, he would surely have explained himself in more detail. He would have expounded the opening of Genesis. His omission of such indicates that he was not yet troubled by the issue of pre-existing matter. This conclusion is corroborated by the fact that even in early rabbinic literature this issue is not

³³*Opif.* 9. It is well-known that Philo, in contrast to Plato, did not assume this model to be an independent entity, but argued that God first created in his Logos an ideal cosmos in the image of which he then created its material counterpart.

³⁴See also Runia, *Philo of Alexandria: On the Creation of the Cosmos according to Moses* 114–9, 152–5.

³⁵*Jub.* 2:1–2; Josephus, *Ant.* 1:27. For this reason I find it difficult to accept the view of Menahem Kister, “Aggadic Traditions and Exegetical methods in the Literature of the Second Temple Period and in Midrashic Literature” in *Jonah Fraenkel’s Jubilee Volume* (ed. Yoshua Levinson, Jacob Elbaum and Galit Hasan-Rokem, forthcoming), who takes *Jub.* 2:1–2 as the earliest extant evidence for a *creatio ex nihilo* theology. This is so, he suggests, because the emphasis on the creation of the abyss, the darkness and the water expresses a nonphilosophical intuition that God’s creation is all-encompassing. In order to explain the absence of תהו ובהו from the above list Kister interprets it in light of a later Talmudic source (*b. Hag.* 12a), suggesting that the expression תהו ובהו which appears there, did not require inclusion in *Jub.* 2:1–2, because in LXX Gen 1:1–2 it is interpreted as “a state of the world rather than real things.” This solution, however, seems problematic. Initially, the LXX translation of תהו ובהו as ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύατος does not negate the existence of this “stuff,” but, on the contrary, implies that chaos preceded order. Moreover, it is difficult to see why the author of *Jubilees* should have relied on the LXX version rather than the Hebrew. Finally, we cannot assume that the author of *Jubilees*, without saying so, shared the views of a much later Talmudic passage. Kister offers a similar interpretation for Philo, *Opif.* 29, which speaks, however, about the ideal forms of the first elements.

³⁶οὐκ ἐξ ὄντων ἐποίησεν (2 Macc 7:28).

³⁷May, *Schöpfung aus dem Nichts* 6–8; Jonathan A. Goldstein, *II Maccabees. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1983) 307–15; cf. J. C. O’Neill, “How Early is the Doctrine of ‘creatio ex nihilo’?” *JTS* 53 (2002) 449–65, who recently advocated again the interpretation of 2 Macc 7:28 as evidence of an early Jewish *creatio ex nihilo* theology.

yet discussed. Tannaitic scholars instead investigate the precise sequence of the creation of heaven and earth as well as the number of students in whose presence one may expound the story of creation.³⁸

Julian the Apostate thus seems to capture the situation well when insisting that in contrast to Christian doctrine Moses did not advocate a *creatio ex nihilo* theology. The latter was in his view utterly un-Jewish. Julian stressed that “in all this, you observe, Moses does not say that the deep was created by god or the darkness or the waters” (*C. Gal.* 49D). In Julian’s view, moreover, the LXX expression ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος positively suggests a creation out of pre-existing matter (*C. Gal.* 49E). Julian presented this biblical evidence in order to show that the Christian dogma of *creatio ex nihilo* was a severe breach of the Mosaic tradition to which his opponents claimed allegiance (*C. Gal.* 43A).

The idea of *creatio ex nihilo*, however, surfaces in *GR*. Rabban Gamaliel presents it as a self-evident doctrine. How can this remarkable shift be explained? How did the contributors and redactor of this midrash come to regard *creatio ex hylis* as a grave theological problem? I shall argue that the key to answering these questions can be found in rabbinic familiarity with Christian exegesis. Years ago, Jacob Neusner drew attention to the fact that the final redaction of *GR* took place in an era when the Roman Empire had already become Christian.³⁹ Applying historical-critical methods, Neusner attributed more importance to the final redaction than to individual, possibly much earlier traditions, because even the latter were inevitably modified in the process of transmission and redaction.⁴⁰ Neusner consequently demanded that *GR* be read as a systematic reaction to the revolutionary changes in the Roman Empire. This midrash, he argued, confronted the new state religion in a comprehensive fashion, searching for answers to its religious challenge of Judaism. It is with this background in mind that we can now approach central passages in *GR*, examining whether they indeed engaged in a Christian discourse.

■ Rabban Gamaliel and the Philosopher

A famous exchange between Rabban Gamaliel II and a philosopher is reported in *Genesis Rabbah*. Its topic is *creatio ex nihilo*. While the philosopher claims that this doctrine is not expressed in the biblical account of creation, Gamaliel attempts to show that it is indeed written in Scripture:

A philosopher asked Rabban Gamaliel and said to him: Your God was a great painter, but he found good colours that assisted him.

³⁸*Mechilta de Rabbi Ishmael*, Pisha 1. *Mechilta de Rabbi Simon b. Yochai*, Beschalach 15:11 (ed. Epstein 93); *t. Hag.* 2:1; *m. Hag.* 2:1.

³⁹Jacob Neusner, “Genesis Rabbah as Polemic: An Introductory Account,” *HAR* 9 (1985) 252–65.

⁴⁰Jacob Neusner, “What Use Attributions? An Open Question in the Study of Rabbinic Literature,” in *When Judaism and Christianity Began. Essays in Memory of Anthony J. Saldarini* (ed. Alan J. Avery-Peck, Daniel Harrington and Jacob Neusner; Leiden: Brill, 2004) 441–60.

He responded: which are these?

[The philosopher answered:] Chaos, darkness and water and wind and the abyss.

"May that man die!" exclaimed Gamaliel, "regarding all of these creation is written in Scripture. Regarding chaos, "I make peace and create evil" (Is 45:7); regarding darkness, "I form the light and create darkness" (ibid.); regarding the water, "Praise Him, you heavens of heavens and you waters that are above the heavens [and the water]" (Ps 148:4) – why? "because he commanded and they were created" (ibid. 5); regarding the wind, "for he that forms the mountains and creates the wind" (Amos 4:13); regarding the abyss, "I [wisdom] was brought forth when there was not yet an abyss" (Prov 8:24)." (GR 1:9)⁴¹

The philosopher who challenges Rabban Gamaliel is obviously not Jewish, because he speaks of "your God" (אִי"כּם). He compares the biblical creator God to a painter, who used pre-existing materials for his work. Gamaliel's reaction is striking: he curses the philosopher, wishing that he may drop dead. The Aramaic formula תפח רוחה דהוא נברה (May that man die!) appears here for the first time in rabbinic literature, being absent in the Tannaitic sources.⁴² After cursing the philosopher, Gamaliel also explains Scripture by using Scripture, assuming that all biblical writings form a homogeneous unity. He thus quotes verses from the prophets and wisdom literature in order to show that each of the elements mentioned by the philosopher has in fact been created by God. The proof-texts fulfill their function to varying degrees. In the cases of darkness and wind, Gamaliel has indeed found verses directly stating their creation by God. This, of course, neither implies that the authors of the books of Isaiah and Amos principally denied the concept of pre-existent material nor that such a concept was shared by the author of Gen 1:1–2. Gamaliel, however, takes the proof-texts to mean precisely that. The cases of the water and the abyss are more complicated. The creation of the water emerges from the context of the proof-text, while Prov 8:24 does not at all

⁴¹ פלוסופוס אחד שאל את ר. נמליאל אמ' לו צייר גדול היה אי"כם אלא שמצא לו כממנין טובין שיסיעו אותו א' לה מה אינון אמר תהו ובהו חושך ומים ורוח ותהומות א' לה תפח רוחה דהוא נברה כולהון כת' בהון ביריה תהו ובהו עושה שלום ובורא רע חושך יוצר אור ובורא חושך מים הללוהו שמי השמים והמים אשר מעל השמים והמים למא כי הוא צוה וי' בראו ורוח כי הנה יוצר הרים ובורא רוח תהומות באין תהומות חוללתי.

This passage is quoted and translated according to the Geniza fragment in Michael Sokoloff, *The Geniza Fragments of Bereshit Rabba* (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Printing, 1982) 79–80; see also a virtually identical version in the critical edition by Theodor and Albeck.

⁴²Michael Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period* (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1990) 355, translated this formula literally as "May the breath of that man expire." It is highly interesting that this expression recurs on two other occasions in *Genesis Rabbah*, both of them in the context of discussions with foreigners (R. Aquiva responding to the wicked Tinneus Rufus in GR 11:5 and another rabbi encountering Alexander the Great and King Kazia in GR 33:1).

say that the abyss was created by God. Wisdom rather states that she was brought forth when there was as yet no abyss. Gamaliel took this verse in an extremely broad sense to mean that the abyss was created by God from nothing. The notion of chaos indeed poses a particular problem, because Gamaliel's proof-text does not even contain the word *תהו ובהו* (formless void). The only other verse in Scripture where this term appears, Jer 4:23, has not been adduced here, presumably because it refers precisely to the kind of *Urchaos* which Gamaliel denies. Instead, Isa 45:7 has been chosen where God says "I make peace and create evil." This proof-text indicates that Gamaliel associates pre-existing material with evil, insisting that this, too, was created by God.

Reading Gamaliel's proof-texts, one can hardly avoid the impression that he made considerable efforts to prove something from Scripture that cannot be proven. His procedure shows that there is a fundamental gap between his own views and those of the biblical writers. While Gamaliel himself is deeply worried about the prospect of pre-existing matter implied in Gen 1:1–2, the biblical writers remain strikingly indifferent to this issue and formulate no particular teaching on this topic. It is moreover remarkable that Gamaliel's position is not systematically maintained throughout *Genesis Rabbah*. Rabbi Yochanan b. Nappacha subsequently presupposed *hyle* in the process of creation (*GR* 10:3).

These facts prompted David Winston to argue that Gamaliel's argument is merely a fragmentary and highly exceptional phenomenon not reflecting the rabbis' *opinio communis*. Instead, it was formulated as an ad hoc reaction to a gnostic.⁴³ Winston considered Gamaliel's harsh reaction understandable in the context of his assumption that the rabbi was actually confronted with the gnostic notion of a second god. Given the implications of this thesis, it is surprising that Winston does not refer to any gnostic source that may have served as a *Vorlage* for the philosopher's query. It is moreover conspicuous that the gnostic ideology to which Gamaliel supposedly reacted, namely, the idea of two gods, is patently absent in the rabbinic passage.⁴⁴ Instead, the philosopher merely claims that the God of the

⁴³David Winston, "The Book of Wisdom's Theory of Cosmogony," *History of Religions* 11 (1971/72) 187–91; similarly Alexander Altmann, "Gnostic Themes in Rabbinic Cosmology," in *Essays in Honour of the Very Rev. Dr. J. H. Hertz* (ed. Isidore Epstein, et al.; London: E. Goldston, 1942) 28.

⁴⁴Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism"* 26 and 51–53, has identified a distinction of some sort between a truly transcendent deity and the creator god described in the Hebrew Bible as a "basic common feature" of the texts usually classified as "gnostic" for which he instead suggests the category "biblical demiurgical traditions." See also Ithamar Gruenwald, "The Problem of the Anti-Gnostic Polemic in Rabbinic Literature," in *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions Presented to Gilles Quispel on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (ed. Roelof van den Broek and Maarten J. Vermaseren; Leiden: Brill, 1981) 171–89, who identified similar cases where a "gnostic" background has been claimed for a rabbinic passages without much justification. Menahem Kister, "Let Us Make Man," [in Hebrew] in *Issues in the Study of the Talmud: Conference on the Occasion of the 5th Anniversary of Prof. Efraim Urbach's Death* (Jerusalem: The Israel National Academy of Sciences, 2001) 58–60 (English version forthcoming in *JSJ*), similarly criticized Winston's interpretation.

Hebrew Bible used pre-existing materials in his creation. The identification of this rather general statement as “gnostic” clearly is a modern construct that confuses more than it clarifies. Finally, Winston’s suggestion that Gamaliel formulated his views spontaneously on the occasion of meeting the philosopher is open to severe doubt. A close reading of the rabbinic story reveals that Gamaliel does not in fact appear like someone formulating ad hoc a completely new idea, trying it out so to speak for the first time. On the contrary, he emerges as someone defending a well-established teaching against a heretic. His answer to the philosopher is a curse. This posture presupposes some form of authority as well as a rather clearly defined set of ideas which is thus defended.

The language of our rabbinic story provides some clues that point in an altogether different direction and open radically new avenues for interpretation. Two central statements by Gamaliel are transmitted in Aramaic. He asks the philosopher מַה אֵינּוּן (Which are these?) and curses him in Aramaic (תַּפַּח רוּחָה דְּהוּא נִבְרָה) [May that man die!].⁴⁵ As already mentioned, the Aramaic curse formula appears only in Amoraic sources, while naturally being absent in Tannaitic literature. Ahron Mirsky, who pleaded for a Tannaitic date of our passage, admitted that the Aramaic expressions seriously challenge his thesis.⁴⁶ Indeed, the Aramaic phrases indicate that the text in its present form was the product of Amoraic activity.

This insight has crucial implications for our overall understanding of the story. It emerges that it was redacted long after Gamaliel’s death. The story in its present form is Amoraic, belonging to the third or fourth century, while Rabban Gamaliel was active in the first century, assuming leadership of the new rabbinic center at Yavneh after Yochanan ben Zakkai and becoming Nasi around 80 C.E. This time gap between the historical figure and the story gives rise to important questions: does the story reflect Tannaitic material or does it rather convey the image of Gamaliel as he was perceived some two or three hundred years after his death?⁴⁷ Put differently, is only the style of the story later or its contents also?

We find a first clue to answering these questions when we consider Rabban Gamaliel’s personality. His character in our story significantly differs from his image in the Tannaitic sources closer to his lifetime.⁴⁸ In early rabbinic texts Gamaliel

⁴⁵Only MS Oxford 1 presents Gamaliel’s question in Hebrew מַה הֵן, and this is undoubtedly a later Hebraisation of the earlier Aramaic.

⁴⁶*Midrash Tannaim on the Book of Genesis* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 2001) 5.

⁴⁷These questions have been overlooked by Jonathan A. Goldstein, “The Origins of the Doctrine of Creation Ex Nihilo,” *JJS* 35 (1984) 131–33; idem, “Creation Ex Nihilo: Recantations and Restatements,” *JJS* 38 (1987) 188–89, who simply took Gamaliel’s statements as a proof for the existence of a *creatio ex nihilo* theology in the first century.

⁴⁸For an overview of sayings attributed to Rabban Gamaliel II, see Wilhelm Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten* (vol. 1; Strassburg: K.J. Trubner, 1903) 73–95; see also Ben Zion Wacholder, “The Stories of Rabban Gamaliel in the Mishnah and the Tosefta,” [in Hebrew] in *Proceedings of the Fourth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem: The World Union of Jewish Studies, 1967) 1:143–44.

is frequently presented as encountering pagans, especially pagan philosophers. On all of these occasions Gamaliel's attitude is open and tolerant.⁴⁹ Once he is depicted as explaining to a Roman official that the Torah was transmitted in both a written and an oral version (*Sifre* 351). Another time he is said to respond to a philosopher's question why God, who is supposedly omnipotent, did not destroy all the pagan idols. Gamaliel answers that God does not abolish the stars and other items he created only because the pagans mistakenly worship them (*Mekilta* 20:5). The most famous example of Gamaliel's involvement in Greco-Roman culture is to be found in *m. Avodah Zarah* 3:4, where he is said to have met "Proclus the son of Philosophos" in the bathhouse of Aphrodite. The rabbi justified his visit there by insisting that the Greek goddess is merely a decoration and therefore no threat to his religious integrity.⁵⁰ Throughout rabbinic literature composed prior to *Genesis Rabbah* Gamaliel emerges as someone well integrated into Hellenistic culture and on good terms with its intellectual representatives. In the extant Tannaitic sources Gamaliel shows no interest in the story of creation. His portrait in *GR* 1:9 is thus highly exceptional.

The riddle of Gamaliel's portrait in *GR* can be solved. The story of his encounter with the philosopher is, I suggest, pseudepigraphic, attributing statements to Gamaliel which he himself never made.⁵¹ A discourse stemming from a later time has retroactively been associated with Gamaliel. It was not the Tannaitic rabbi who encountered a philosopher pleading for *creatio ex hylis*. Instead, Amoraic teachers became familiar with the Christian *creatio ex nihilo* theology and constructed a similar dichotomy between "orthodox" and "heretical" ideas in their own community. It is rather natural that such a dispute should have been attributed to Rabban Gamaliel, because he was famous for his encounters with pagan philosophers. His leadership position in Yavneh furthermore made him a highly suitable candidate to curse ideas that were found to be dangerous errors.

This proposition is not as audacious as it may seem at first sight. A passage in the Babylonian Talmud shows that the figure of Rabban Gamaliel was indeed modernized and retroactively associated with the challenge of Christianity. Gamaliel is presented there as meeting a Christian philosopher, who said to him: "On the day when you were expelled from your land, Moses' Torah was rendered invalid and the gospel was revealed."⁵² Rabban Gamaliel's reaction is extraordinary: he refers to "the Evangelion" (עוון גליון), quoting from the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus had not come to abolish the Law, but rather to fulfill it. The language

⁴⁹See also Tropper, *Wisdom, Politics, and Historiography*, 126–29.

⁵⁰Seth Schwartz, "The Rabbi in Aphrodite's Bath: Palestinian Society and Jewish Identity in the High Roman Empire," in *Being Greek under Rome* (ed. Simon Goldhill; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 335–61.

⁵¹Methodologically, I follow here the lead of Louis Jacobs, "How Much of the Babylonian Talmud is Pseudepigraphic?" *JJS* 28 (1977) 46–59.

⁵²*b. Shabbat* 116b

מן יומא דגליתון מארעכון איתנשלית אורייתא דמשה ואיתיהבית עוון גליון.

of Gamaliel's reply indicates that this story must have been written much after his death. It is striking that Gamaliel is made to refer to the עוֹן גְּלִיין. Its Greek or Latin equivalent (εὐαγγέλιον, "evangelium") is a technical term for the Gospels as a collection of four canonical writings. This term in its technical sense appears in Christian literature only towards the end of the second century when Irenaeus discussed problems of the Christian canon (*Haer.* 3:11.7–8).⁵³ If this term was put into Gamaliel's mouth in the Babylonian Talmud, we are obviously dealing with an anachronistic attribution of later traditions to this figure.⁵⁴ This case encourages us to understand also Gamaliel's dispute with the philosopher in *GR* 1:9 as a text that emerged in a much later context, when Judaism confronted the challenge of a well-established Christian church.

If my thesis is correct and our story in *GR* 1:9 reflects issues at the time of its redaction, we have to investigate the topical context in which it emerged. Clear traces lead to Christian disputations against earlier philosophers defending a *creatio ex hylis*. Before the appearance of orthodox structures in the church, Christian writers, such as Justin and Clement, still enjoyed the freedom to express their affinity to the Platonic tradition. They spoke without inhibition of a creation out of pre-cosmic matter.⁵⁵ Clement moreover drew attention to the fact that the LXX expression "the earth was invisible and without order" (Gen 1:2) was rather commonly interpreted as an indication of the "material substance" from which the world was created (*Strom.* 14:90.1).

Theophilus and Irenaeus, however, radically changed this situation towards the end of the second century. Platonic cosmology was rejected and adherence to it among Christians was treated as a severe theological error.⁵⁶ Theophilus and Irenaeus began to formulate a *creatio ex nihilo* theology that was intended to supersede current philosophical notions. Both writers consciously rejected the Platonic model. Theophilus accused the Platonists of disgracing God by assuming pre-existing material and thus, in his view, equating God with matter (*Autol.* 2:4). "What would be marvelous," asked Theophilus, "if we assume that God created the cosmos from pre-existing material?" (*ibid*). One must not imagine the deity to be an artist, since he is far more independent in his creativity than the former.

⁵³Ehrman, *Lost Christianities* 229–46; Robert M. Grant, "The New Testament Canon," in *The Cambridge History of the Bible* (ed. Peter R. Ackroyd and Christopher F. Evans; Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1970) 1:286–97. I would like to thank Prof. Mogens Müller from the University of Copenhagen for drawing my attention to the late date of the term εὐαγγέλιον in its technical sense.

⁵⁴Regarding the Babylonian stories about Gamaliel, Allan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1977) 116, has already expressed doubts regarding their historical authenticity and spoken of "folk romance" without, however, considering their Christian background.

⁵⁵Edwin R. Goodenough, *The Theology of Justin Martyr* (Amsterdam: 1968) 206–11; May, *Schöpfung aus dem Nichts* 122–35; Henry Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966) 46–48.

⁵⁶May, *Schöpfung aus dem Nichts* 150–82.

Theophilus insists that divine power can precisely be seen in the fact that God “creates the things he wants out of the non-existent.”⁵⁷ Irenaeus similarly argued that God used “no other means” of creation except his word (*Haer.* 2.2.5).

Tertullian’s disputation *Against Hermogenes* propagates a similar position and is of particular interest. Hermogenes himself is little known. He must have been active in the region of Syria in the late second century, because he had already provoked Theophilus to a no longer extant treatise against him.⁵⁸ Between 203–213 he may have spent time in Carthage and there challenged Tertullian. Hermogenes himself was identified as a Christian, and was known as such to Clement of Alexandria.⁵⁹ Tertullian, however, regarded him as someone beyond the limits of the church. He accused him of betraying Christianity by adhering to the Platonic academy.⁶⁰ Tertullian insisted that a Christian has to decide between these two poles and cannot claim allegiance to both. This construction of a deep dichotomy between the church and the academy throws significant light on the process of Christian self-definition vis-à-vis earlier forms of Christianity.⁶¹ It indicates how orthodox structures began to emerge.

Tertullian’s image of Hermogenes is extremely important for a proper understanding of our story in *GR* 1:9. Tertullian presents him as adducing biblical proof-texts for the notion of *creatio ex hylis*. Hermogenes is no longer satisfied, as Justin still was, to transmit Platonic cosmology, but makes efforts to ground these views in Scripture. Parallel to the philosophers mentioned by Clement, Hermogenes paid special attention to the opening of Genesis, taking Gen 1:2 as a proof for pre-existing matter that God used to create the world as described in Gen 1:1. The LXX rendering, “the earth was invisible and without order,” is of particular importance to him, because it corresponds to the Platonic description of pre-cosmic chaos. Moreover, the imperfect form ἦν, or in Tertullian’s words “erat,” supports Hermogenes’s notion of a continuous state of pre-cosmic matter.⁶² *Hyle* indeed played a significant role in his theology. Like Plato, he assumed that it is the origin

⁵⁷Θεοῦ δὲ ἡ δύναμις ἐν τοῦτῳ φανεροῦται ἵνα ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων ποιῇ ὅσα βούλεται (*Theophilus, Autol.* 2:4).

⁵⁸Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4:24.

⁵⁹Clement, *Ecl.* 56, quoted by Katharina Greschat, *Apelles und Hermogenes. Zwei theologische Lehrer des zweiten Jahrhunderts* (Leiden: Brill, 2000) 144.

⁶⁰*Herm.* 1:4, Heinrich Dörrie, “Was ist ‘spätantiker Platonismus’? Überlegungen zur Grenzziehung zwischen Platonismus und Christentum,” *TRu N.F.* 36 (1971) 285–302, stressed the unbridgeable gap between Platonism and Christianity, leading to a situation that any Christian who did not express an anti-Platonic position “risked . . . to slip into heresy” (298). This view was challenged by Cornelia J. De Vogel, “Platonism and Christianity: A Mere Antagonism or a Profound Common Ground?,” *VC* 39 (1985) 1–62.

⁶¹See also Jan H. Waszink, “Observations on Tertullian’s Treatise against Hermogenes,” *VC* 9 (1955) 129–49; Gerhard May, “Hermogenes—ein frühchristlicher Theologe zwischen Platonismus und Gnosis,” *SPSP* 15 (1984) 462–73.

⁶²*Herm.* 22:1; ed. Frédéric Chapot, *Tertullien, Contre Hermogène. Introduction, texte critique, traduction et commentaire* (SC 439; Paris: Cerf, 1999), translations are mine.

of the world's imperfection (*Herm.* 25:3). This explanation, Hermogenes suggested, acquits God from responsibility for something utterly unlike him.

Tertullian's refutation of Hermogenes is of equal importance for us. Several strategies are used: rhetoric against Hermogenes's profession as a painter, a curse, biblical proof-texts and, finally, philosophical arguments. Tertullian initially mocks his opponent's views and threatens with a curse:

But concerning the idea that all things are so to speak created from underlying material, I have nowhere read about it thus far: Hermogenes's workshop should show that it is written. If it is not written, however, let it fear the woe reserved for those who add or subtract something from Scripture.⁶³

Tertullian continues in his rhetorical attack, insisting that Hermogenes's interpretation is typical of those who always twist the simple meaning of Scripture, creating problems where none in reality exist (*Herm.* 25:3). On several other occasions Tertullian returns to the motif of the painter. Once he remarks cynically that Hermogenes found the idea of pre-existing material "on his palette, since in God's Scripture he could not have found it."⁶⁴ The verb "invenio" is used here for a nice play on words, with Tertullian suggesting that his opponent found the colors on his palette and was inspired by them to invent the notion of pre-existing material. Having insulted Hermogenes a few more times as a confused painter, Tertullian closes his treatise with the following remarks:

By describing the same condition of matter as his own, namely as raw, disordered and turbulent, moved by a double movement both declining and descending, Hermogenes has painted himself and given proof of his art.⁶⁵

Tertullian's rhetoric relies on Hellenistic prejudices against painters, who were associated with low social status and superficial philosophy.⁶⁶ These Hellenistic traditions are now turned against an early Christian thinker deeply imbedded in that culture. Hermogenes's exegesis is thus caricatured as the fantastic product of a painter's unbridled mind. Tertullian suggests that he fabricated his creator god according to his own image. The god whom Hermogenes imagines resembles the painter himself rather than the god of Scripture.

⁶³*Herm.* 22:5 "An autem de aliqua subiacenti materia facta sint omnia, nusquam adhuc legi: scriptum esse doceat Hermogenis officina; si non est scriptum, timeat uae illud adicientibus aut detrahentibus destinatum."

⁶⁴*Herm.* 33:1. [S]ed dum illam Hermogenes inter colores suos inuenit—inter scripturas enim dei inuenire non potuerit.

⁶⁵*Herm.* 45:6 "Nisi quod Hermogenes eundem statum describendo materiae quo[d] est ipse, inconditum confusum turbulentum, ancipitis et praecipitis et feruidi motus, documentum artis suae dum ostendit, ipse <se> pinxit;" other polemics against Hermogenes as painter can be found in *Herm.* 36:3, 38:1.

⁶⁶Chapot, *Tertullien, Contre Hermogène*, 435–36.

Besides these rhetorical attacks, Tertullian also makes efforts to refute Hermogenes's exegesis by utilizing serious arguments. His readers must not be misled by his opponent's ideas and should instead grasp their weaknesses. Tertullian initially refers to verses from the prophets and wisdom literature, most of them the very same ones as were later used in *Genesis Rabbah*. Tertullian thus explains that the abyss cannot be identified as pre-existing matter, because Prov 8:24 militates against it. This verse, he stresses, says that wisdom was created before the abyss "so that you can be sure that also the abyss was created."⁶⁷ Tertullian uses Prov 8:24 in the same way as Gamaliel, spelling out what his rabbinic colleague left implicit. Furthermore, Tertullian, like Gamaliel, adduces Isa 45:7 as a proof for the creation of darkness by God. He, too, relies on Amos 4:13 to prove the creation of the wind. Only Prov 8:29, suggesting the creation of the water, is not paralleled in our rabbinic story (*Herm.* 32). Moreover, Tertullian solves the problem of Gen 1:2 in a way slightly different from Gamaliel. The LXX rendering, "the earth was invisible and without order," is explained by its immediate context, namely Gen 1:1. In contrast to Hermogenes, Tertullian takes the latter as a summary of all creation processes. While Hermogenes thought that the creation described in Gen 1:1 was based on the pre-existing material mentioned in Gen 1:2, Tertullian identified Gen 1:1 as an introductory statement on *creatio ex nihilo* which is then discussed in greater detail in Gen 1:2.⁶⁸

Tertullian also produced philosophical arguments against Hermogenes. His main target was the view that pre-existing matter is the origin of evil in the world. Tertullian refutes this idea by pointing to the true nature of God which is in his view incompatible with this notion. Being omnipotent, omniscient, and wholly benevolent, God cannot have relied on pre-existing material which turns out to produce evil. If Hermogenes were right, God would be reduced to a rather powerless slave of matter.⁶⁹ Tertullian prefers to think of God as omnipotent and benevolent without, however, offering an answer to the question of evil.

It is in this context that the rabbinic story about Gamaliel and the philosopher becomes meaningful. The image of the philosopher is evidently constructed in the image of Tertullian's Hermogenes. He speaks precisely from the position of the outsider that Tertullian assigned to his opponent. Challenging Gamaliel about "your" God, this philosopher is positioned outside the community. He has moreover adopted the rhetoric of the painter that Tertullian originally used to dismiss his adversary. Parallel to the caricatured Hermogenes, Gamaliel's philosopher applies

⁶⁷"ut credas abyssum quoque genitam" (32:2).

⁶⁸See also Peter Schäfer, "Bereshit Bara Elohim. Zur Interpretation von Gen. 1:1 in der Rabbinischen Literatur," *JSJ* 2 (1971) 161–66, who pointed to the exegetical potential of Gen 1:1, which can be read either as an independent summary of the whole process of creation or as part of a longer statement that is completed only in Gen 1:2.

⁶⁹*Herm.* 8:1–11:3; see also Adelbert David, "Hermogenes on Matter," in *Eulogia. Mélanges offerts à Anton A. R. Bastiaensen à l'occasion de son soixante-cinquième anniversaire* (ed. Gerard J. M. Bartelink, et al; De Hague: Nijhoff, 1991) 29–32.

to God notions from the painter's work. He, too, speaks of pre-existing matter in terms of the colors found on the palette. Regarding Gamaliel, there is a striking resemblance to Tertullian's *Adversus Hermogenem*. Gamaliel's style of refutation closely resembles that of his Christian predecessor. He curses the philosopher on account of his misleading exegesis and adduces mostly the same biblical proof-texts for his *creatio ex nihilo* theology. The curse formula in the third person furthermore strengthens the impression that the philosopher is not directly present, but instead refuted from a distance.⁷⁰ This perspective is the same as that of Tertullian, who speaks about rather than to his opponent.

Important conclusions may be drawn. Initially, it emerges that the Amoraic scholars responsible for the story in *GR* 1:9 must have been familiar with Christian exegesis. How are we to imagine the circumstances of this familiarity? Are we to assume the physical presence of Tertullian's treatise in the rabbinic Beit Midrash? Geographical distance and the Latin composition of Tertullian's text rather argue against it. The contents of Tertullian's treatise, however, circulated in the works of other writers as well. Tertullian himself may have drawn part of his rhetoric from Theophilus's lost disputation. The latter seems to have enjoyed wide popularity, being known to many ancient writers. Hippolytus, for example, drew on this material around 230 in Rome (*Haer.* 8:17, 1–4). Augustin and Theodoret of Cyrene, who had been educated in Antiochia, were still familiar with Hermogenes's views and transmitted the material.⁷¹ It is remarkable that these later writers merely produced abbreviated versions of the earlier polemics without engaging in fresh disputations with contemporary adherents of Hermogenes. The issue of *creatio ex nihilo* seems to have been settled for them. The dispute with Hermogenes was only remembered as a struggle of the early church. It had become an icon in the Christian discourse, upholding structures of orthodoxy. In view of these developments on the Christian side it is not surprising that Amoraic teachers were familiar with this icon.⁷²

Moreover, we have identified an extraordinary case of Jewish acculturation. Amoraic scholars appropriated a discourse, which originally served to define the identity of the crystallizing church vis-à-vis earlier forms of Christianity. This discourse was reconstructed in *Genesis Rabbah* for a Jewish community. Rabbinic scholars outlined the contours of a proto-orthodox *synagoga* that would stand beside the *ecclesia*.⁷³ Like their Christian colleagues and predecessors,

⁷⁰The other two occurrences of the formula in *Genesis Rabbah* reflect the same distant perspective in equally fictional encounters with Tinneus Rufus (*GR* 11:5) and Alexander the Great (*GR* 33:1).

⁷¹Greschat, *Apelles und Hermogenes*, 145–59.

⁷²As I realized after writing this article, Kister, "Let Us Make Man," 60–61, relying on his student Clemens Leonhardt, also points to the resemblance between Gamaliel's and Tertullian's philosophers. Kister, however, does not consider the rabbinic story to be dependent on a Christian tradition, but instead argues that it continues an old Jewish tradition that is in his view testified already in Philo and the book of *Jubilees* (see my discussion of this interpretation in note 35).

⁷³See also Haim Lapin, "Jewish and Christian Academies in Roman Palestine: Some Preliminary Observations," in *Raban and Holum, Caesarea Maritima: A Retrospective*, 507, who cautiously considered the possibility that both church fathers and rabbis were "engaging in articulating an 'orthodoxy.'"

they hoped to establish general theological standards that were to be normative. Put differently, parallel to their pagan neighbors Amoraic scholars began to think about their tradition in terms of a religion that could be defined by dogma. Philo made some incipient steps in this direction when suggesting that Jews betraying the values of Judaism in an exceptionally severe manner actually cease being Jewish.⁷⁴ Similarly, Tannaitic teachers had begun to speak about “Minim.” Yet neither of them discussed a particular dogma, identifying precisely what were right and wrong beliefs.⁷⁵ The story about Gamaliel fills in this gap, thus creating some initial orthodox structures within Judaism.

■ Bar Kappara’s Interpretation of Gen 1:1–2 and Its Integration into the Redactional Process of *Genesis Rabbah*

It remains for us to investigate how prevalent these orthodox structures of discourse became throughout *Genesis Rabbah*. How consistently were the boundaries drawn between right and wrong beliefs? We have already seen that the *creatio ex nihilo* theology attributed to Gamaliel was not systematically put into the mouth of subsequent teachers. Rabbi Yochanan b. Nappacha instead described the creation of the world from pre-existing matter, while Rabbi Eliezer assumed that the *תהו ובהו* (formless void) was “uprooted” before the creation of the heaven and earth became apparent (*GR* 10:2–3). The editor of *Genesis Rabbah* clearly refrained from updating all the earlier exegetical material available to him. He did not intend to create a homogeneous tractate neatly replacing previous “errors.” His approach remained rather pluralistic within certain limits and did not amount to a systematic heresiology. This openness probably resulted from the fact that orthodox structures infiltrated from without and were therefore never upheld with the same degree of consistency as in Christian circles where they had emerged. At the same time, however, two other vignettes of exegesis on Gen 1:1–2 suggest familiarity with Christian forms of discourse. It is to them that we must now turn.

Genesis Rabbah preserves an exceptionally interesting interpretation of Gen 1:2 by Bar Kappara, which is integrated into a larger *Peticha*. Unlike Gamaliel, Bar Kappara lived in Caesarea, where he founded the first rabbinic academy just before Origen established his center of study there.⁷⁶ As the teacher of Rabbi Hoshaya, he served as an important link between Tannaitic and Amoraic teachers. Bar Kappara was not only renowned for his collection of authoritative earlier traditions, but also for his lenient position regarding the interpretation of the story of creation. He is

⁷⁴Regarding Philo, see Maren R. Niehoff, *Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2001) esp. ch. 2.

⁷⁵The lack of such details has been emphasized by Goodman, “The Function of Minim.”

⁷⁶Levey, “Caesarea and the Jews,” 55–57.

remembered as an authority that set relatively broad limits of investigation, which were accepted by a later teacher as well as the redactor of *GR*:⁷⁷

Rabbi Yona said in the name of R. Levi: why was the world created with the letter b?⁷⁸ The reason is that the b is closed on all its sides, but open only in the forward direction. In the same way it is not allowed to investigate what is above and beneath as well as what is before and after.

Bar Kappara said: "ask concerning the first days, before your time, from the day of creation onwards" (Deut 4:32). "From the day onwards" when the days were created, you may inquire, but you may not inquire into what was beforehand. "From one end of the heaven until the other end of heaven" (ibid.) you may inquire and examine, but you may not inquire what was beforehand.

R. Yehuda ben Pasi inquired into the story of creation in the way that Bar Kappara had said. (GR 1:10)⁷⁹

This discussion reflects the concerns and terminology of the Tannaitic period. It echoes *m. Hagigah* 2:1, where the prohibition to investigate "מעשה בראשית" (work of creation) in the presence of two" is recorded.⁸⁰ Bar Kappara emerges as someone whose concerns are firmly grounded in the world of the Mishnah. His leniency regarding the interpretation of the creation account, however, foreshadows the interests of the Amoraic period.

Bar Kappara belongs to the "old generation" also in another important respect: he advocates *creatio ex hylis*:

Rab Huna said in the name of Bar Kappara: if it were not written [in Scripture], it would be impossible to say: "God created heaven and earth" (Gen 1:1)—from where? From: "the earth was תהו ובהו (tōhû wābōhû)" (Gen 1:2)⁸¹

⁷⁷Kahana, *Interweaving Six*, appendix, showed that the redactor of *GR* accepted Bar Kappara's position in the dispute and even went beyond it, starting his collection of Midrash with Gen 1:1.

⁷⁸Rabbi Yona refers to the opening of the Biblical creation account בראשית.

⁷⁹ר' יונה בשם ר' לוי למה נברא העולם בבית אלא מה בית זה סתום מכל צדדיו ופתוח מלפניו כך אין לך לדרוש מה למעלה ומה למטה מה לפניו ומה לאחר בר קפרא אמר כי שאל נא לימים ראשונים אשר היו לפניך למן היום וג' למן היום שנבראו ימים את דורש ואין את דורש לפניו מוכאן ולמקצה השמים ועד קצה השמים את הוקר ואין את הוקר לפניו מוכן דרש ר' יהודה בן פזי במעשה בראשית כהדרה דבר קפרא

(text and translation according to ms Vatican 60, on the quality of which see Menachem Kahana, "Genesis Rabbah MS Vatican 60 and Its Parallels" [in Hebrew], in Friedman and Lerner, *Te'uda* 17–60.

⁸⁰See also Philip S. Alexander, "Pre-Emptive Exegesis: Genesis Rabbah's Reading of the Story of Creation," *JJS* 43 (1992) 233–36, who discussed the apparent disregard in *GR* for this prohibition.

⁸¹GR 1:5: ר' הונא בשם בר קפרא אילולי הדבר כת' אי אפשר לאומרו "ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ" מן הן? מן והארץ היתה תהו

(text and translation according to Theodor and Albeck; the Geniza fragment is damaged at this point, but the crucial words by Kappara are preserved:

ר' הונא בשם בר קפרא [] בר כן[] לאומרו בראשית ברא א"ם מן הן מן הארץ היתה תהו (Sokoloff, *Geniza Fragments* 77).

This argument for *creatio ex hylis* is precisely the same as Hermogenes had advocated. Gen 1:2 is read as a reference to pre-existing matter from which God created the heaven and the earth as described in Gen 1:1. Here, however, it is transmitted by Rab Huna as the view of Bar Kappara. In comparison to Hermogenes, Bar Kappara expresses himself more apologetically, stressing that “if this were not written [in Scripture], it would be impossible to say.” Who is the audience addressed by Bar Kappara? What kind of criticism did he anticipate? Given the larger context of his exegetical concerns, it is likely that Bar Kappara feared to be accused of launching precisely into the field of inquiry that he himself had forbidden. He therefore stressed that he only paraphrases what is written in Gen 1:1–2. He is not, as some might suspect, investigating into what was “before.”

A later editor, however, understood Bar Kappara’s statement in the context of his own time, especially in the context of *creatio ex nihilo* theology. While preserving the original statement, he placed it into an altogether new context, namely the discussion of unorthodox views of creation:

Rab Huna said in the name of Bar Kappara, “let the lying lips be dumb that speak arrogantly of the righteous” (Ps 31:19). Let them be bound, dumb and silenced. “Bound” as it says in the verse “For behold, we were binding sheaves” (Gen 37:7); “dumb” as it says in the verse “Or who made a man dumb or deaf” (Exod 4:11); “silenced” as the word is understood.

“[Lying lips] that speak arrogantly against the righteous” (Ps 31:19), meaning [speaking] against the righteous who is the Life of all worlds, things that [God] has kept away from his creatures.

“with pride” (Ps 31:19) – in order to be proud and say, “I [expound] the *מעשה בראשית* (work of creation).”

“And contempt” (Ps 31:19) – he condemns my glory! As R. Jose b. Chanina said: [everyone] who believes he can gain honour by disgracing his friend has no part in the world to come. All the more so in regard to disgracing God! What is written thereafter? “How abundant is your goodness that you have preserved for those who fear you” (Ps 31:19).

Rav said: He may have no part in God’s goodness. In our world [it is common that a] human king builds [his palace] in a place of sewage, a place of garbage and a place of rubbish. Everyone who passes by and says: “This palace [was built] in a place of a sewage canal, in a place of garbage and in a place of rubbish” disgraces (the king). Does not similarly everyone who passes by and says “the world is created from *בהו תהו* and darkness disgrace (God)”?

Rab Huna said in the name of Bar Kappara: if it were not written in Scripture, it would be impossible to say: "God created heaven and earth" (Gen 1:1) – from where? From: "תהו בהו" (Gen 1:2).⁸²

This is a long-winded and complicated *Peticha* which juggles two rather different discourses. These have been amalgamated not without leaving some visible traces. Menachem Kahana and Theodor Albeck identified this *Peticha* as a creation of the editor, who thus embellished Kappara's exegesis of Gen 1:2 ("if it were not written . . .").⁸³ While Kahana studied stylistic features, focusing on numerological arrangements, I would like to investigate traces of changing notions about creation. Put differently, can we isolate different redactional layers each with its theological characteristics?

It is immediately conspicuous that this *Peticha* is highly polemical. While dealing again with the topic of *מעשה בראשית* (work of creation), Bar Kappara is now made to quote Ps 31:19, accusing the "lying lips" of transgressing into a field which God "kept away from his creatures." Unlike the exegesis transmitted in his name in GR 1:10, Bar Kappara now sets out to fight errors and lies. More importantly, two Amoraic teachers are introduced: Rabbi Jose b. Chanina and Rav. While the former remains close to Ps 31:19, Rav raises the issue of *creatio ex nihilo*. Parallel to Theophilus,⁸⁴ he insists that the assumption of pre-existing matter is a serious insult to God. His rhetoric recalls that of his Christian colleagues, who were concerned to construct boundaries of faith beyond which there is no salvation. Rav similarly excludes from "God's goodness" the one who says that "the world is created from *בהו* and darkness." His parable suggests a highly negative view of pre-existing matter, which is compared to "sewage, garbage and dung." It has become an element detrimental to the glory of God. Therefore one must not directly speak

⁸²GR 1:5, text and translation according to Geniza fragment, Sokoloff 77, with fillings of the lacunae from Theodor and Albeck 2–3:

ר' חונה בר קפרא פתח תאלמנה שפתי שקר הדוברות על צדיק עתק בג[א]וה ובזו[ן]
 אהפרכן אתחרשן אשתתקן אתפרכן כמ' דאת אמ' והנה אנחנו מאלמים אלומים אתחרשן
 כמה דאת אמ' או מי ישום אלם או חרש אשתתקן כשמועו הדוברות על צדיק עתק
 הדוברות על צדיק חי עולמים שהעתיק מבריותיו ו[בגא]וה אתהכה [אתמהא] בשביל
 להיתנאות ולומר אני [דורש] במעשה בראשית ובזו אתמהא מבזה על כבודו אתמהא
 דאמר ר' יוסי בן חנינא [כל] המתכבד בקלון חבירו אין לו חילק לעו' הבא בכבודו
 שלקבה אתמהא מה כת' אחר[יו] מה רב טובך אשר צפנת ליראיך רב אמר אל יהי לו
 מה טובך בננה העו' [מלך בשר] ודם בונה [פלשין] במקום הביבין ובמק' האשפה ובמק'
 הסיריות, כל מי שיבוא לומ[ר] פלשין זו ב[גו]ה במקום אמת המים שלצואה {הביבין}
 במ האשפה ובמ' הסיריות אינו פוגם [אתמהא] כך כל מי שיבוא לומ[ר] העו' הזה נברא
 [מתוך ת]הו ובהו וחושך אינו פוגם ר' חונה בשם . . . בר קפרא. [אלולי הד]בר כ[ת]
 אי אפשר [לאומרו ברא אי]ם את השמים ואת הארץ מן הן מן ארץ היתה תהו.

⁸³Kahana, *Interweaving Six* 8; Albeck, *Midrash Bereshit Rabba* 1:2 and 3:14–16, suggested that the attribution of many *Petichot*, including Bar Kappara's in GR 1:5, was not based on knowledge that a particular teacher was indeed responsible for that *Peticha*, but rather on the editor's judgment that it fits a known exegesis of that teacher.

⁸⁴Theophilus, *Autol.* 2:4 (for details, see above).

about it. While its existence is still acknowledged, *hyle* has been excluded from the proper discourse about God.

Placed into this distinctly Amoraic context, Bar Kappara's interpretation appears in a completely new light. It looks now as though it were originally formulated, in view of a prevalent *creatio ex nihilo* theology. The editor of this *Peticha* thus reconstructed exactly the same dichotomy that we encountered in our previous example. Once more we encounter the image of a rabbinic establishment confronting a representative of an earlier, problematic approach to Gen 1:1–2. While in the story about Gamaliel this representative was an outsider, in this *Peticha* he comes from within, albeit from the Tannaitic period. The rhetoric in this *Peticha* is less fierce than in the story in *GR* 1:9, but the message is the same.

One important question remains to be addressed: did Rav himself formulate the *creatio ex nihilo* theology attributed to him or is this attribution instead pseudepigraphic as in the case of Rabban Gamaliel? Did the editor, in other words, place an available saying by Rav into the new context of Bar Kappara's exegesis, thus changing the latter's thrust, or did he himself make up the statement on *creatio ex nihilo* and then attribute it to Rav? In comparison to the story about Gamaliel, the question here is more difficult to determine. In the case of Rav there are no overt signs of a discrepancy between the historical figure and the saying attributed to him. Being an Amoraic teacher, he flourished precisely at a time when rabbinic teachers encountered the Christian *creatio ex nihilo* theology. Leaving Palestine before Origen established himself there, he could have encountered the doctrine in one of the diffuse ways we suggested in the context of Gamaliel's story: either by direct contact with any of the Christian documents promulgating *creatio ex nihilo* or general familiarity with the topos. Theophilus may have been influential. Furthermore, Rav's statement is consistent, being based on a "Qal wa-Chomer" analogy rather than on forced proof-texts from Scripture. The kind of textual indications that led us to suggest pseudepigraphy in the case of Gamaliel are thus missing in Rav's statement.

Nevertheless, one may suspect that an editor, who put the *creatio ex nihilo* theology into Gamaliel's mouth, would wish to do the same for the founder of the influential academy in Sura. Two important rabbinic leaders would thus be theologically aligned. Furthermore, one may wonder whether Rav's statement fits his overall profile. It is only in a much later source that he returns to the issue of *creatio ex nihilo*, arguing in *b. Hag.* 12a for the creation of *תָּהוּ בְהוּ* on the first day. However, while Rav's statement does not reflect any of his personal traits, such as his Babylonian background or his interest in mantic states of consciousness,⁸⁵ it does not contradict the general picture of his personality. On the contrary, it corresponds well to his other interpretations of the process of creation (*GR* 4:2, 4:7). Nothing

⁸⁵*GR* 16:3, *GR* 49:10, 17:4, 44:12, 44:17; see also J. S. Zuri, *Rab. Sein Leben und seine Anschauungen* (Zürich: Bruchdruckerei G. v. Ostheim, 1918) 122–25.

therefore seems to argue against the assumption that Rav himself encountered the *creatio ex nihilo* theology in Palestine and subsequently exported it to Babylonia. The editor of *GR* seems to have used an available tradition, placing it in the new *Peticha* beside Bar Kappara's exegesis.

■ R. Hoshaya's Interpretation of Gen 1:1

The last exegetical vignette to be examined in this article is transmitted in the name of Rabbi Hoshaya, who settled in Caesarea at the same time as Origen. He, too, founded a rabbinic academy there, which he led for twenty years parallel to its Christian equivalent. These chronological and geographical factors place Hoshaya right at the center of a milieu in which exchanges between Jews and Christians took place. It is thus especially intriguing to see how Hoshaya reflected on the issue of creation. A famous *Peticha* in his name opens *Genesis Rabbah*:

"In the beginning God created heaven and earth." (Gen 1:1)

R. Hoshaya opened (his interpretation with a quotation from Prov 8:30) "I was with Him אִמּוֹן". . . .

"Amon" should be vocalized as "Uman" (אִמּוֹן) – an artist or architect. The Torah said: I was the instrument of the Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He. A human king usually builds his palace not according to his own device, but according to the device of an architect, and the architect in turn does not build according to his own device, but he has plans and diagrams in order to know where to arrange rooms and doors. In the same way the Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He looked into the Torah and created the world. And the Torah said: "At the beginning God created" (Gen 1:1), and "beginning" is nothing else but Torah, as it is written: "God created me at the beginning of his ways." (Prov 8:22)⁸⁶

Hoshaya applies here the well-known image of the architect or artist to the creator God. Unlike the philosopher in the story about Gamaliel, Hoshaya uses the image in a positive way, stressing the good arrangement of the world created by God. It is truly a cosmos in the original sense. The parable furthermore highlights that the material creation is dependent on some ideal, metaphysical structure. Hoshaya indicates that God, like a human king, did not act on his own initiative, but relied on plans in the image of which the artifact was shaped. Both the contents of the

⁸⁶*GR* 1:1 (text and translation according to Geniza fragment, Sokoloff 77, with fillings of the lacunae according to Theodor and Albeck 1):

[אש]עיה רבה פתח וא[היה] אצלו אמוֹן . . . אמוֹן אומן ה[תורה] אומרת אני הייתי כלי אומנותו שלקובה בנוהג שבעל מלך בשר ודם בונה [פלשין] ואינו בונה א[ו]תה מדעת עצמו אלא מדעת האומן והאומן אינו בונה אותה מדעת[ו] אלא דפתריות ופינקסיות יש לו לידע איך הוא עושה פשפשים כך היה הק'בה מביט בתורה ובורא את העולם והתורה אומרת בראשית ברא א"ם בראשית ברא א"ם אין ראשית אלא תורה כמה דא אמ' יי קנני ראשית דרכו.

parable as well as its Greek loanwords (דִּפְטֵרֹאוֹת וּפְנִקְסוֹת [plans and diagrams])⁸⁷ have reminded scholars of Philo's parable of the architect.⁸⁸ It is indeed conspicuous that both exegetes employ the parable when interpreting Gen 1:1. Both moreover employ it in order to point to the ideal plan of creation. Both even rely on the same introductory formula: בְּנוֹהַג שְׁבַעֲוֹלָם (usually) in *GR* 1:1, εἰκόνη τινὶ τῶν παρ' ἡμῶν in *Opif.* 17. Can we thus follow David Winston and conclude that Hoshaya adopted Philo's parable, revising it slightly by exchanging the notion of Logos by the more specific Torah?

Some significant differences between Philo's and Hoshaya's parable rather call for caution. Initially, Philo's parable is far more detailed. He enumerates many characteristic elements of the Hellenistic city, including gymnasium, market place, town hall, temple, etc. (*Opif.* 17). Hoshaya, by contrast, shows no interest in the details of the Hellenistic city, referring only in a general way to the king's palace. Furthermore, Philo is concerned about defining the nature and location of the ideal cosmos. He stresses that one must not imagine it as something residing in a corporeal place, but rather as an aspect of the divine Logos (*Opif.* 19–20). Philo thus amalgamated the figures of the king and the architect. Each of them represents, in his view, a different aspect of God who is both entirely transcendent and active in his creation. Hoshaya's parable, by contrast, is centered differently. He assumes an architect distinct from the king, who uses as a plan the Torah which is, so to speak, the word of God in the flesh. It is moreover remarkable that Hoshaya grounds his exegesis in Prov 8:30, thus recalling a long tradition of speculation about the personification of divine wisdom, especially in Ben Sira chapter 24.⁸⁹ Most importantly, however, Hoshaya is concerned to claim the notion of beginning for the Jewish tradition. As if to exclude other interpretations, he stresses: אֵין רֵאשִׁית אֵלָא תוֹרָה ('Beginning' is nothing else but Torah).⁹⁰

A fresh investigation into the historical context of Hoshaya's exegesis is thus called for. Wilhelm Bacher already drew attention to the role of Origen whom he

⁸⁷ Διφθέρα, piece of leather, esp. as writing material; πίναξ, plate with anything drawn or engraved.

⁸⁸ See esp. David Winston, "Philo's *Nachleben* in Judaism," *Studia Philonica Annual* 6 (1994) 104–5; David T. Runia, "Caesarea Maritima and the Survival of Hellenistic-Jewish Literature," in *Caesarea Maritima: A Retrospective after Two Millennia* (ed. Avner Raban and Kenneth G. Holum; Leiden: Brill, 1996) 492–93; Harry A. Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975) 1:243, merely pointing to the parallel between Philo, *Opif.* 17 and *GR* 1:1, and 1:268, where Wolfson suggests that Philo followed *GR* 1:1 and interpreted Prov 8:22 in terms of a feminine wisdom figure (*Ebr.* 31); Yonah Frankel, *The Ways of Aggadah and Midrash* [Hebrew] (Givataim: Massada, 1991) 1: 74–75; see also Urbach, *The Sages* 163–64, and Kister, "Let Us Make Man" 47–48, suggesting a common source for the Philonic and the rabbinic parable.

⁸⁹ See esp. *Sir.*, ch. 24, where wisdom is identified with the Torah and traced to the "mouth of the Most High." In Ben Sira, however, neither Prov 8:30 nor the parable of the architect are explicitly mentioned.

⁹⁰ See also Ben Sira's main message in ch. 24 that there is no wisdom except Torah.

identified as a mediating figure familiarizing Hoshaya with Philonic exegesis.⁹¹ He imagined Hoshaya as using the books in Origen's library, among them also the Philonic corpus. This was a seminal suggestion that has been adopted and elaborated by Dominique Barthélemy, R. Ascough and David Runia.⁹² In one respect, however, this approach requires some reconsideration. Origen's role does not seem to have been purely technical. Instead, he may have played a far more active role, transmitting to Hoshaya not only a particular Philonic tradition, but also its Christian interpretation. The transmission of Philo's texts was thus not only a technical process, amounting to a flow of information from one quarter to another, but implied also a significant degree of cultural translation and modernization. When we read Hoshaya's exegesis closely, we recognize that he reacted precisely to such Christian mediation.

Within the framework of this article we cannot possibly do justice to all of Origen's discussions on the creation of the world. In order to appreciate Hoshaya's exegesis, however, it suffices to focus on two key texts that indicate an important development in his thought on the topic. Having moved to Caesarea, Origen increasingly departed from Philo's views, embellishing his exegesis with christological elements from the Gospel of John. In his *Commentary on Genesis*, composed for the most part still in Alexandria, Origen spoke in distinctly Philonic terms:

As much as it were absurd to say of the cosmos, which is arranged so artfully, that it has become this way without a wise artist, in the same way it is illogical to assume concerning the *hyle*, which is of such size and quality and yields to the artist, God's Logos, that it is without beginning. (Origen apud Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 7:20)

Origen uses here the image of the artist in order to point to the metaphysical order of the world. The nature of the cosmos, he argues, requires the assumption that it was formed by the divine artist. Philo makes the same point when insisting that the cosmos was created by God in the image of an ideal cosmos (*Opif.* 7–22). Origen applies this argumentation also to the *hyle*. In contrast to Philo and the Platonic tradition, he no longer accepts it as something pre-existing, but insists on its creation by God.⁹³ It is remarkable that even on this issue, where Origen follows the Christian fathers, he uses typically Philonic language.

⁹¹Wilhelm Bacher, "The Church Father Origen and Rabbi Hoshaya," *JQR* 3 (1890) 359.

⁹²Dominique Barthélemy, "Est-ce Hoshaya Rabba qui censura le 'Commentaire Allégorique'?" in *Philon d'Alexandrie. Colloques nationaux du Centre national de la recherche scientifique* (Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1967) 45–78; Richard Ascough, "Christianity in Caesarea Maritima," in *Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success in Caesarea Maritima* (ed. Terence L. Donaldson; Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000) 167; David T. Runia, "Caesarea Maritima and the Survival of Hellenistic-Jewish Literature," who takes *GR* 1:1 as a central proof for the availability of Philo's work in Origen's library in Caesarea.

⁹³In recent scholarship the significance of Origen's position has been disputed. While Gerald Bostok, "Origen's Philosophy of Creation," in *Origeniana Quinta. Papers of the 5th International Origen Congress, Boston College, 14–18 August 1989* (ed. Robert J. Daly; Leuven: Leuven

In his *Commentary on the Gospel of John* Origen presents a different interpretation. He links the notion of beginning to two new figures: wisdom and Christ. The divine artist, by contrast, has retired into the background. A new christological orientation thus emerges, which appropriates ἀρχή, for the Christian tradition:

Look whether this is so and the text Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος (In the beginning was the Word) can be understood according to its spiritual interpretation, namely in the sense that everything was created according to wisdom and the form of a superior plan whose notions are contained in the word. I think that as much as a house or a ship is built and formed according to the plans of an artist, in the sense that this house and this ship contain as a principle (ἀρχή) the plans and words of the artist, in the same way everything was created according to the words which God in his wisdom predetermined for his creatures, (as is written) “In wisdom you have made everything.” (Ps 103:24)

It is not difficult to say in a slightly coarser way that the principle (ἀρχή) of all existing things is the Son of God, who says: Ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος, τὸ Α καὶ τὸ Ω, ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος. (Rev 22:13). (*Comm. Jo.* 113–116)

Origen explores here the meaning of ἀρχή, interpreting it metaphorically as principle rather than beginning.⁹⁴ He is no longer predominantly interested in the origin of the world, but in its overall frame and abiding structure. The parable of the artist is consequently mentioned in a rather abbreviated form and with a new purpose. The idea of a model for creation remains in the background, while Origen focuses on its ultimate purpose. The connection between God’s word, his wisdom and Jesus has now become crucial. Divine wisdom is not only cosmic, underlying the creation of the whole world, but also highly specific, pointing to the Christian redeemer figure. The universal beginning has been appropriated for Christianity, which is thus inscribed “in the beginning.”

Hoshaya’s exegesis of Gen 1:1 strikingly resembles Origen’s. He, too, merely mentions the palace of the king without further details. He, too, explores the meaning of ראשית (beginning) in the metaphorical sense of an underlying principle. He, too, moves from Gen 1:1 to the notion of divine wisdom. In contrast to Origen, however, Hoshaya interprets this beginning and wisdom with regard to the Torah transmitted by the Jews. We have already noted that his formulation אין ראשית אלא תורה (‘Beginning’ is nothing else but Torah.) suggests that he was aware of another interpretation. It seems that Origen’s exegesis was that other interpretation. Hoshaya adopted a Christian discourse, but translated it into rabbinic terms, thus countering the Christian claim to the origin of the world.

University Press, 1992) 255–57, argued for strong Platonic roots of Origen’s thought and tried to limit the significance of his *creatio ex nihilo* theology; Mark J. Edwards, *Origen against Plato* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002) 61–65, convincingly identified Origen’s interpretation of creation as a prime example of his departure from Platonism.

⁹⁴On metaphorical interpretations of Plato’s *Timaeus*, see above.

Given the circumstances of his life, Hoshaya is likely to have been the author of the tradition attributed to him. As a contemporary and fellow-citizen of Origen, he can easily have been familiar with his exegesis. Living at a time when some Jewish-Christian debates seem to have taken place in Caesarea, Hoshaya may well have responded to Origen's christological interpretation which challenged contemporary Jews. The impression of Hoshaya's authorship is further supported by the style of our passage that lacks signs of editorial interference.

■ Conclusion

This analysis of three exegetical vignettes in *Genesis Rabbah* has shown that some rabbinic interpreters of Gen 1:1–2 were familiar with Christian exegesis. In particular, Amoraic teachers were aware of the new theological trends introduced by the church. They adopted the idea of *creatio ex nihilo*, reconstructing for their own communities a significant dichotomy between correct and erroneous views. In this way they created a Jewish discourse whose structure and basic assumptions resembled their Christian counterparts. Only when Origen appropriated the notion of beginning for the Christian tradition, thus excluding Judaism, can we recognize a more polemical response on the rabbinic side. Hoshaya countered by insisting that “beginning” was nothing but Torah. It thus seems that as long as Christian constructions of identity were concerned with fighting general philosophical notions, rabbinic teachers did not consider it necessary to make emendations. Rather, the church created a new religious atmosphere which eventually also permeated rabbinic texts.

This case of rabbinic acculturation to the christianized Roman Empire needs to be appreciated in a larger context. We have already noted that pagans began to think about their traditions in terms of dogmas. We moreover saw that the rabbis refrained from the kind of extremism which we encounter on the Christian side. Even in *Genesis Rabbah* other “erroneous” views of the creation were allowed to be expressed. Rabbinic literature remained polyphonic within certain limits. The program of orthodoxy thus remained partial and did not reach the same systematic implementation as found in Christian circles.

Shades of Grace: Origen and Gregory of Nyssa's Soteriological Exegesis of the "Black and Beautiful" Bride in Song of Songs 1:5*

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Patristic exegesis soared to sublime heights with the allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs.¹ This nuptial tale, replete with evocative imagery and multivalent symbolism, supplied fertile ground for the mystical musings of Origen (ca. 185–254 C.E.) and Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 335–395 C.E.).² Although its overt eroticism engen-

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¹For a concise and helpful overview of patristic biblical exegesis, especially vis-à-vis Origen's hermeneutics, see chapter 4, "The Interpretation of Scripture," in Henri Crouzel's magisterial *Origen: The Life and Thought of the First Great Theologian* (trans. A. S. Worrall; San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989) 61–84. Excellent broad overviews can be found in the articles "Allegory" and "Interpretation of the Bible" in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (ed. Everett Ferguson; 2d ed.; New York: Garland Publishing Co., 1997). See also the fine articles by Manlio Simonetti "Cantico dei Cantici" and "Scrittura Sacra" in *Origene. Dizionario. La cultura, il pensiero, le opere* by Adele Monaci Castagno (Roma: Citta Nuova Editrice, 2000).

²In the prologue to his translation of Origen's *Homilies on the Song of Songs* Jerome extols the singular brilliance of Origen's allegorical exegesis to Pope Damasus I (366–384 C.E.): "While

dered some apprehension, the profound symbolic meanings deployed by the church fathers enabled the church to embrace fully the Song of Songs as a deep reservoir of theological insight.³ Always provocative and potentially scandalous, it perennially generates hermeneutical difficulties. Since exegesis invariably reflects the social and historical location of the interpreter, disparate themes and issues will resonate with different readers in different eras. For a generation of scholars attentive to the problem of racism, Song 1:5 merits particular attention because of its complex employment of racial imagery. In this verse the Bride proudly declares: “I am black and beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Qedar, like the curtains of Solomon” (הָאֲנִי שְׁחֹרָה וְיָפִי [šəḥôrâ ʾănî wə-nāʾwâ]; μέλαινα εἰμι καὶ καλή). Both the Hebrew and Greek word for “black,” שְׁחֹרָה and μέλας, have negative connotations, and the ambiguous sense of the conjunction between μέλαινα and καλή constitutes the grammatical crux of the hermeneutical debate.⁴

This essay advances two interrelated approaches to analyzing Origen and Gregory’s theological exegesis of Song 1:5. First, it problematizes their use of negative symbolism for blackness in their expositions of this verse.⁵ Second, it proposes that their innovative use of allegory enables them to transcend racial categories and thus to obviate what might appear to modern readers as racist rhetoric. I will argue that in distinct yet related ways, the exegesis of Origen and Gregory utilizes black imagery to convey soteriological truth rather than racial stereotypes or anti-black sentiments. They concern themselves ultimately not with race but with the doctrine of salvation.

Origen surpassed all writers in his other books, in his Song of Songs he surpassed himself.” in *The Song of Songs Commentary and Homilies* (trans. R. P. Lawson; ACW 26; New York: The Newman Press, 1956) 265. This paper will cite the pagination of Lawson’s translation of the Latin original. Lawson notes that the original Greek texts of Origen’s commentary and homilies on the Songs of Songs are no longer extant, although there are some small fragments. Rufinus translated the original commentary into Latin. Unfortunately, he translated only three out of the ten books of the original, as Jerome reports (2–3).

³*The Song of Songs: Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentaries* (ed. and trans. Richard A. Norris, Jr.; *The Church’s Bible*, ed. Robert Louis Wilken; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003) xviii. Norris comments that the Song of Songs was included late in the Hebrew Canon because of the interpretive difficulties involved in identifying the symbolic referents of the lovers and their attendants. From an early point in Jewish and Christian interpretation, the book was “reckoned among the deepest and most difficult texts in the Bible.”

⁴Michael V. Fox notes that הָאֲנִי שְׁחֹרָה וְיָפִי is best translated “black *but* beautiful” rather than “black *and* beautiful” which inverts the meaning. See *HarperCollins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (London: HarperCollins, 1993) 1002, n. 1:5. יָפִי means “desirable,” and καλή means “beautiful.” The usual word for “beautiful” in Hebrew is (fem.) יָפִיָּה, hence the Greek text is glossing over a, perhaps exegetically undesirable, nuance here.

⁵For a recent in-depth study of Origen’s treatment of the Song of Songs, as well as his hermeneutical method more generally, see J. Christopher King, *Origen on the Song of Songs as the Spirit of Scripture: The Bridegroom’s Perfect Marriage Song* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

■ Origen: The Bride as the Purified Gentile Church

Consistent with his exegetical method, Origen begins the *Commentary on the Song of Songs* by outlining his understanding of the literal sense of the passage (II.1).⁶ He speaks in the voice of the Bride to explicate the basic meaning: that the Bride is beautiful *despite* being black. At this point in the narrative, the Bride responds to the daughters of Jerusalem, who apparently have disparaged her beauty because of her dark complexion. She retorts that her black skin conceals an inner beauty, just as the black tents of Qedar and the black curtains of Solomon conceal inner beauty. In Origen's imaginative reconstruction of this text, he expressly associates the Bride's blackness with ugliness. The Bride herself implicitly affirms the correlation of black skin with ugliness by attributing her beauty to an internal rather than an external state, as Origen puts it: "I am indeed dark (*fusca*)—or black (*nigra*)—as far as my complexion goes, O daughters of Jerusalem; but, should a person scrutinize the features of my inward parts, then I am beautiful (*formosa*)".⁷ Thus, she shifts the aesthetic locus from her external hue to her internal state of virtue. By transposing the context of her beauty from a surface condition to a spiritual condition, she betrays her internalization of their negative assessment of her bodily blackness.⁸ At the same time, however, she supplants these negative attitudes and associations by denying their ultimate significance in determining her aesthetic status.

Origen proceeds from the literal level of the text to the mystical, which also coheres with his standard hermeneutical procedure.⁹ As he enunciates in the Prologue, the Bride in the story represents the Church,¹⁰ but in this passage she represents more specifically "the Church gathered from among the Gentiles" (*ecclesiae personam tenet ex gentibus congregatae*).¹¹ The daughters of Jerusalem represent the Jews

⁶Origen, *The Song of Songs: Commentary and Homilies*, 19. Lawson's English translation of these texts uses the critical edition of Origen's works by W. Baehrens, *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte* (GCS, vol. 8; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1925). This paper will also consult with this critical edition throughout.

⁷Origen, *Song*, 91.

⁸Moreover, the transposition of beauty from an external condition to an internal state corresponds to the shift from surface to depth, which is the *modus operandi* of Origen's allegorical method.

⁹Origen, *Song*, 92. Norris, *The Song of Songs*, xviii: "The ancient writers find no difficulty in transferring the language of erotic love to spiritual matters. Indeed, the primary reason for resorting to allegory is that they assumed that any writing included in scripture treated, in one manner or another, the relation between God and human beings. They believed that human *erôs*, even when it is focused by desire for union with another human person, displays a receptivity to and a reaching out for a more ultimate love."

¹⁰Origen, *Song*, 21.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 92. Norris, *Song*, 39. He translates ἔθνη as "nations" instead of "Gentiles." The first systematic allegory of the Song of Songs was by Rabbi Akiba in the early second century, who described it as "the Holy of Holies" and interpreted it as an allegory of "God's love for Israel" (xviii): "This kind of exegesis was also practiced by Christians, beginning with Hippolytus of Rome and Origen, both of whom saw in the Bridegroom a representation of Christ (i.e., the eternal Word and Wisdom of God), and in the Bride a representation of the Church, that is, the people of God. This ecclesiological interpretation of the Song became a dominant, and in some cases the exclu-

who “despise and vilify her for her ignoble birth,” in other words, they degrade Gentile Christians because of their inferior ancestry. According to this mystical interpretation, the aspersion “black” refers not to skin color but to the state of being unenlightened by the wisdom of the patriarchs and particularly by the Mosaic law. As with his literal exegesis, “black” (*nigra*) here has an unmistakably negative resonance. Blackness symbolizes for Origen a particular sort of spiritual opacity. Although the Gentile church (*ecclesia ex gentibus*) cannot boast of Jewish descent and Mosaic enlightenment (*illuminatio Moysis*), it nonetheless shares with the Jews an innate capacity for divine enlightenment. As Origen writes, “But I have my own beauty, all the same. For in me too there is that primal thing, the Image of God (*imago Dei*), wherein I was created; and, coming now to the Word of God, I have received my beauty.”¹² Origen regards divine ancestry as more fundamental than human ancestry. Since God created all humans, regardless of race, in the image of God, the Gentile church can reflect divine beauty through the Word of God. The Gentile church may lack the ancestral pedigree and exterior signs of enlightenment, but close inspection shows its truly authentic and salvific illumination.

Later, when Origen draws further symbolic parallels between the Bride, the queen of Sheba, and the personified Ethiopia of Psalm 67, he characterizes “Ethiopia,” before its conversion, as the “black one” who “has been darkened with exceeding great and many sins and, having been stained (*infectus*) with the inky dye of wickedness, has been rendered black and dark (*niger et tenebrosus*).”¹³ Origen’s typology operates under the assumption that the blackness of the Bride, the queen of Sheba, and Ethiopia signify spiritual opacity. In his exegesis the quality of blackness denotes sin, wickedness, and spiritual deficiency.¹⁴ Consequently, the Bride only becomes beautiful when she transforms her blackness into fairness or whiteness, which denotes spiritual enlightenment. Thus, Ethiopia represents the Gentile sinners who offer “confession and repentance” to God and subsequently, it is implied, become beautiful by becoming white.¹⁵ Origen’s exegesis clearly intends to use categories of color symbolically, but the racial implications of his commentary require careful nuance and critical reflection; I shall take up that task in the final two sections.

In his exegesis of Song 1:6, Origen continues to develop these soteriological themes and symbolic frameworks. In this verse the Bride expresses her shame over

sive, theme of later Christian exegesis (and, not least, that of Nicholas of Lyra, the late-medieval commentator). Origen, however, taught that the Song could also be taken to speak of the relation between the Word of God and the individual soul” (xix).

¹²Origen, *Song*, 92.

¹³*Ibid.*, 103. Origen notes the parallel between the Bride and the queen of Sheba (the South) in his *First Homily on the Song of Songs* I.6, 277–78.

¹⁴Gay L. Byron, *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference in Early Christian Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2002) 74.

¹⁵Origen, *Song*, 103.

her deformed condition of blackness (*nigredine*) or darkness (*infuscatione*): “It is not a natural condition in which she was created,” Origen argues, “but something that she suffered through force of circumstance.”¹⁶ In the very next sentence Origen qualifies his assertion by remarking that the passage obviously does not refer to “bodily blackness” (*nigredine corporis*) but to the soul’s blackness. J. Christopher King explains: “When the Bride speaks of her blackness . . . Origen interprets her words asomatically.”¹⁷ Whereas the physical blackness of the “Ethiopian race” (*gentem Aethiopum*) results from prolonged exposure to the sun’s “fiercer rays” (107), spiritual blackness results from the “Sun of Justice” (*sol iustitiae*, ἥλιος δικαιοσύνης).¹⁸ The light of the “spiritual sun” (*sol spiritualis*) affects the obedient and disobedient differently. For the obedient and upright, it causes illumination (*illuminat*), but for the disobedient, the sun “must needs look askance”—thereby scorching the soul and making it black.¹⁹ Origen correlates the positive illuminating effect of the sun to spiritual enlightenment and the negative burning effect of the sun to spiritual darkening: “The sun has twofold power: it enlightens the righteous; but sinners it enlightens not, but burns.”²⁰ The symbolic contrast between darkness and light continues in his exegesis of Song 1:6, though with an emphasis on the soul’s illumination.

By uniting with Christ, the soul becomes purified from sin and gradually recovers its beauty: “Once she [the Bride or soul] begins to . . . cleave to Him [the Bridegroom or Christ] and suffer nothing whatever to separate her from Him, then she will be made white and fair (*dealbata et candida*).”²¹ Since spiritual blackness occurs through neglect and sloth, one must transform it through industry, in other words, through purification. Salvation then occurs in the movement away from darkness into ever-brightening light: “When all her blackness has been cast away, she will shine with the enveloping radiance of the true Light.”²² Thus, Origen’s exegesis of 1:6 reinforces the symbolic framework that he developed in his exegesis of 1:5. Whereas his primary typological referent for the Bride in the Song of Songs remains the Gentile church, he also identifies her with the individual soul. These two typologies do not appear inconsistent or mutually exclusive for him, because his allegorical approach allows him to discover multiple symbolic meanings that need not cohere with each other. As Origen delves deeper into mysteries of the text, his symbolism becomes increasingly multivalent and theologically complex.

¹⁶Ibid., 107.

¹⁷King, *Origen on the Song of Songs as the Spirit of Scripture*, 57.

¹⁸Origen, *Song*, 108. Lawson, *The Song of Songs*, 331, n. 60. Lawson notes that the “Sun of Justice” has Messianic overtones for Origen and that he explicitly identifies this “Sun” with Christ throughout his corpus. He also mentions that the word Ethiopian (Ps 67:32, Αἰθίοψ: αἶθω, ὄψ) means “burnt-face” (331, n. 57).

¹⁹Ibid., 109.

²⁰Ibid., 112.

²¹Ibid., 107.

²²Ibid.

Origen treats Song 1:5 in his *First Homily*, and many of the themes that surfaced in his commentary echo here.²³ In this homily Origen puzzles over the simultaneous ascription of blackness and beauty to the Bride. He takes it to be self-evident that the two are antithetical: "But the question is, in what way is she black and how, if she lacks whiteness, is she fair?"²⁴ Here again Origen associates blackness with sin and whiteness with beauty. He presupposes the same symbolic framework that he constructed in his commentary. The Bride represents the Gentile church purified from sin, and her beauty, according to Origen, results from the divine gift that follows repentance: "She has repented of her sins, beauty is the gift conversion has bestowed; that is the reason she is hymned as beautiful."²⁵ She retains her beauty, then, despite her blackness, which represents the vestiges of sin that remain following conversion: "She is called black, however, because she has not yet been purged of every stain of sin, she has not yet been washed unto salvation."²⁶ So the beauty of the Gentile church consists in its conversion to Christ, while its blackness consists in the continued tinge of sin in the church. Blackness represents the stain of sin that must be washed away through the purification of baptism. According to Origen, this symbolic nexus explains how the Bride can be simultaneously black and beautiful: "*Intelleximus, quomodo et nigra et formosa sit sponsa.*"²⁷

For Origen, then, blackness clearly connotes a negative predicate that describes the state of the Gentile church before conversion. Salvation, consequently, he may metaphorically express as the gradual transformation from darkness (sin) to whiteness (purity): "Nevertheless she does not stay dark-hued, she is becoming white."²⁸ The process of purification uses blackness and whiteness as primary symbols. In true homiletic fashion, Origen then applies the black and white dualism to the individual soul: "But if you do not likewise practice penitence, take heed lest *your* soul be described as black and ugly."²⁹ Blackness indicates the shameful quality of sin in the Gentile church *and* in the individual soul, as he mentioned above. Since it is "a forbidding hue," it engenders ridicule and causes the Bride shame, as he writes, "'Look not at me, for that I am blackened.' She apologies for her

²³Lawson, 16–17. Origen's two *Homilies* on the Song of Songs were written in Greek and are no longer extant in the original version. Jerome translated them into Latin and included a prologue addressed to Pope Damasus I. Lawson surmises that Origen probably wrote the *Homilies* a few years after his *Commentary*, that is, before 244 c.e. Furthermore, he argues that these *Homilies* are an "indispensable" but often overlooked resource for apprehending Origen's theology, especially his soteriology or "doctrine on grace." His translation of these texts into English seeks to remedy this oversight.

²⁴Origen, *First Homily*, 1.6, 276.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

blackness.”³⁰ Just as darkness represents the absence of light in the physical world, so in the spiritual realm darkness indicates the absence of spiritual light: “The Sun has looked down on me. With full radiance His bright light has shone on me, and I am darkened by His heat. I have not indeed received His light into myself.”³¹ As we noted previously, Origen argues that the light of Christ can either darken or lighten the soul, depending on its receptivity. A permeable soul absorbs the light of Christ through repentance and thereby becomes beautified by illumination. The opaque soul repels the light of Christ, which results in spiritual darkness and ugliness. In section three Origen’s portrayal of blackness in his commentary and homily on Song 1:5 will be analyzed further.

■ Gregory of Nyssa: The Bride as the Beautified Soul

Gregory of Nyssa’s fifteen homilies on the Song of Songs follow the same hermeneutical trajectory that began with Hippolytus of Rome (b. 170–75 C.E.), whom most scholars agree composed the first Christian allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs.³² Origen, however, receives the credit for giving the allegorical reading of the Song its classic expression.³³ In fact, Gregory acknowledges Origen’s exposition in his prologue and situates his commentary alongside it: “Although Origen laboriously applied himself to the Song of Songs, we too have desired to publish our efforts.”³⁴ Their commentaries, though similar in hermeneutical and theological approach, differ in symbolic emphasis. Gregory identifies the Bride primarily with the individual soul, while Origen identifies her mainly with the church. Quasten remarks:

The Song of Songs represents to him the union of love between God and the soul under the figure of a wedding. It is this aspect of the book that predominates in Gregory’s commentary in contrast to Origen, who, particularly in his homilies on the subject, prefers to regard the Bride as the Church [specifically the Gentile Church]—an interpretation that Gregory does not neglect, but relegates to a minor role.³⁵

³⁰Ibid, 278.

³¹Ibid.

³²For an extensive treatment of Gregory’s commentary on the Song of Songs, see Franz Dünzl’s *Braut und Bräutigam: die Auslegung des Caniticum durch Gregor von Nyssa* (Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Exegese 32; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1993).

³³Gregory of Nyssa, *Commentary on the Song of Songs* (trans. Casimir McCambley; Brookline, Mass.: Hellenic College Press, 1987) 5–6. All references to Gregory will utilize McCambley’s pagination.

³⁴Gregory, *Commentary*. 39.

³⁵Johannes Quasten remarks on the relationship between Gregory and Origen: “The forward concludes with high praise of Origen, whose mystical exegesis has beyond doubt had a powerful influence on Gregory. Nevertheless, Gregory is too deep and independent a thinker to follow slavishly the Alexandrian master” (*Patrology* [Utrecht: Spectrum Publishers, 1964–1966] 3:266).

Much like Origen, however, Gregory posits that the Song has deeper levels of meaning beyond the literal storyline.³⁶ When understood properly, it functions as a paradigmatic text for the transmission of both philosophical and theological knowledge: “Once again the Song of Songs (τὸ ᾠσμα τῶν ᾠσμάτων) is presented to us as a guide for every type of philosophy and knowledge of God (φιλοσοφίας τε καὶ θεογνώσις).”³⁷ Gregory operates with a twofold conception of the text that corresponds to the twofold levels of meaning. The exterior or literal level appears easily apprehensible by everyone. Conversely, the interior or symbolic meaning requires purification from sin as a necessary precondition for accessing its meaning: “All these things can be found in the literal meaning if we only prepare ourselves to enter the Holy of Holies (τὰ ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων) after having been purified from the filth (ρύπον) of shameful thoughts by the bath of the Word (τῷ λουτρῇ τοῦ λόγου).”³⁸ Just as entry into the Holy of Holies was forbidden to the unclean, so entry into the mystical knowledge of God is forbidden to the sinful.³⁹ Those who have cleansed themselves from sin have the capacity to apprehend the mysteries hidden within the story.

Once the purified soul perceives that a figurative narrative runs parallel to the literal story (though on a hidden, mystical level), the true spiritual meaning can emerge. Gregory depicts the Bride in Song 1:5 as a teacher instructing her pupils about the mysteries of God. Her self-description as “black and beautiful” (μέλαινα καὶ καλή) discloses not her self-perception or complexion but rather the nature of divine love. For Gregory, the Bride represents the soul, and the predication of blackness denotes its sinfulness: “I have become dark through sin (ἐξ ἁμαρτίας).”⁴⁰ The Bride’s blackness signifies the “repulsiveness” that results from the soul’s wicked deeds. Consequently, in harmony with Origen, Gregory explicitly characterizes blackness as the antithesis of beauty. Something *makes* the Bride beautiful *despite* being black: “Although I am black, I am now this beautiful form, for the image of blackness has been transformed into beauty (μετεσκευάσθη γὰρ τὸ ὁμοίωμα τοῦ σκότους εἰς κάλλους μορφήν).”⁴¹ When juxtaposing their commentaries, one sees that Gregory and Origen employ similar hermeneutical methods and interpretive categories in their exegesis of this verse. Both employ symbolic interpretations and utilize racial categories to describe the spiritual state of the soul. Moreover, blackness represents their principal symbol for spiritual sinfulness, repulsiveness, and ugliness, which indicates the quality of the soul that the Bridegroom must either overlook or transform.

³⁶Norris, *The Song of Songs*, xx, 37. Gregory follows Origen’s twofold application of a moral (individual soul) and Christological or ecclesiastical (the church) reading of the Song.

³⁷Gregorii Nysseni, *In Canticum Canticorum* (ed. W. Jaeger; trans. Hermannus Langerbeck; Gregorii Nysseni Opera, vol. 6; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960) 59. This paper cites from this critical edition.

³⁸Gregory, *Commentary*, 60.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid. 61.

According to Gregory, the fundamental theological meaning of this verse is not humanity's sinfulness but rather of God's "immense love for mankind."⁴² In her sinful condition the Bride remains unsuitable for marriage, but her Bridegroom graciously transforms her ugliness into beauty. Gregory delineates the salvific process by which the soul becomes beautiful through the interrelated concepts of incarnation and atonement:

Although I have become dark through sin and have dwelt in gloom by my deeds, the Bridegroom made me beautiful through his love, having exchanged his very own beauty for my disgrace [Is 53:2–3; Phil 2:7]. After taking the filth of my sins upon himself, he allowed me to share his own purity, and filled me with his beauty.⁴³

Gregory delineates the nature of divine love, which deigns to enter into the human condition and assume humanity's sinfulness for its salvation. The Bride's beauty metaphorically expresses the soul's salvation from sin, and by imitating Christ the sinful soul grows in beauty. Gregory, like Origen, associates the soul's blackness with its *past* sin: "My former life has created this dark, shadowy appearance (τὸ σκοτεινὸν καὶ ζοφῶδες)."⁴⁴ Although the soul's past sins impinge upon its present existence, it nevertheless remains beautiful on the grounds that it abides "loved by righteousness."⁴⁵ The traces of sin indelibly affixed to the soul do not mar its beauty, since these traces only indicate a sign of its past life, not its present reality.

Gregory posits a theological link between Song 1:5 and Rom 5:8: "But God proves his love for us in that while we were sinners Christ died for us." Both God's love and humanity's sinfulness constitute the central features of both texts, he avers. Gregory expounds Rom 5:8 using the racial categories of Song 1:5: "Although we were darkened through sin, God made us bright (φωτοειδεῖς) and loving through his resplendent grace."⁴⁶ Here Gregory applies the duality of darkness and light to soteriological transformation. The gloom of night (i.e., sin) has darkened our souls, although they are "light by nature" (λαμπρὰ κατὰ φύσιν), and stand in need of spiritual illumination. Salvation means the process whereby the soul becomes beautiful by internalizing Christ's resplendent grace. Gregory illustrates the soteriological import of Song 1:5 using Paul's conversion: "Paul, the bride of Christ, had become radiant from darkness."⁴⁷ Hence, just as the Bride's blackness transformed into beauty, so Paul, "a blasphemer, persecutor, insulter, and black in color (μέλας)," became illuminated, in effect made spiritually light/white, by Christ. This transformation from darkness to light, in other words, from sin to salvation, occurs in the cleansing of baptism, which symbolizes the "bath of regeneration"

⁴²Ibid., 60.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid., 61.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid.

that washes away the soul's "dark form" (ἡ σκοτεινὴ μορφή). Gregory argues, then, that Paul conceives of salvation as the enlightenment of the darkened soul: "Paul also says that Christ entered the world to enlighten those who were dark."⁴⁸ Hence, Gregory correlates Paul's explicit soteriology in Romans with the implicit soteriology of Song 1:5.

Gregory adduces another scriptural passage to elucidate his notion of the soul's salvific enlightenment. In Ps 87:4 the citizenry of the "heavenly Jerusalem" includes Ethiopia and other foreign peoples.⁴⁹ The demographics of the city of God, Gregory avers, will be multi-ethnic and multi-national. Interestingly, he comments that "the Ethiopians become light in color" in the heavenly city, a change which symbolically marks their salvific transformation. When applied to the narrative, Gregory argues that this passage reveals the Bridegroom's goodness in accepting his black Bride. When read allegorically, however, it testifies to the goodness of Christ, who receives the "blackened soul" and "restores its beauty by fellowship with himself (τῇ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν κοινωνίᾳ καλὴν ἀπεργάζεται)."⁵⁰ Salvation, according to Gregory, consists of the beautification of the soul that ensues from its purification from sin. But the negative metaphysical or spiritual status of blackness entails that the soul's beauty requires illumination or whitening. By conceiving of salvation as the process of "becoming light" or white, he makes blackness an evil quality both spiritually and physically. Although Gregory only draws a correlation between blackness and sin on a spiritual level, it nevertheless tends to reinforce racially prejudiced opinions. He may, thus, inadvertently provide transcendental legitimization for prejudicial views, since the material world ought to reflect truths in the spiritual realm. In the final two sections, I shall develop this critique and advance a theological solution.

After explicating verse five, Gregory proceeds to expound on the closely interconnected verse six. Apparently the Bride, not originally black, became black by exposure to the sun: "Do not gaze at me because I am dark, because the sun has gazed on me" (Song 1:6). Allegorically this verse accounts for the origin of evil, which the pigmentation of the Bride symbolically represents. Just as the Bride originated white, so the soul originated pure of sin. Moreover, just as the Bride became dark by exposure to the sun, so the soul becomes sinful by succumbing to temptation: "The cause of darkness is not ascribed to the Creator, but its origin is attributed to the free will of each person."⁵¹ Blackness, then, does not appear "natural," either spiritually or physically. Gregory focuses not on the literal level but on the spiritual implications that follow, namely, the theological anthropology that it suggests: "Human nature was an image of the true light, far removed from

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid., 62.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

any darkness: it gleamed by imitation of the archetype's beauty."⁵² The natural light or white condition of the soul, then, corresponds to its condition as originally pure and enlightened by God. But by their exercise of free will, souls become "burned" by the sin that results from yielding to temptation, which renders it ugly: "The sun burns the bright surface of the body by the assault of temptations and blackens its form in ugliness,"⁵³ The anthropology that he develops from Song 1:6, therefore, reinforces the negative association between blackness and sinfulness. Blackness, he argues, results from a perversion of the original white, pure condition of the soul.

Gregory returns to the theme of the Bride's beauty in his fourth homily. Before commenting on the passionate panegyric in verses 15–16 of chapter one, Gregory pauses to reflect once more on the nature of spiritual beauty and corruption, a topic which he introduced in his exegesis of Song 1:5. He compares the soul's purification from sin and return to primal beauty to the purification of adulterated gold through fire. In the beginning human souls remained bright by virtue of their pure reflection of God: "Human nature was golden at the beginning and shone by reason of its resemblance to the undefiled good."⁵⁴ But a "foreign matter" became mixed with the soul and resulted in its defilement and adulteration. The advent of sin vitiated the soul's ability to reflect God's light. Verse five, he observes, symbolically indicated this problem: "However, it [the soul] became discolored and blackened by the admixture of vice as we have heard the Bride say at the beginning of the Song of Songs: her neglect to tend the vineyard made her black [1:5]."⁵⁵ Sin, then, represents the failure of the soul to continue in its natural and proper good. In its sinful state the soul becomes "discolored and blackened" (δύσχροις καὶ μέλαινα), since impurities have adulterated its golden or bright hue. The categories implied here cohere with Gregory's earlier ones. A healthy, pure soul remains golden and bright, while an unhealthy, impure soul becomes discolored and blackened. The source of the darkening of the soul, consistent with the symbolic matrix outlined above, comes from sin.

As before, Gregory does not place the weight of his allegorical interpretation on the sinfulness of the blackened soul. On the contrary, he accentuates the solution, not the problem, gleaned from Song 1:5. Mired by sin and diminished in its capacity to reflect the divine, the soul stands in need of grace, just as the Bride needs beautification. Not willing to put her away quietly, God restores her original state of beauty, which corresponds to God's redemption of the soul:

God, who fashions all things in his wisdom, cares for his Bride's deformity.
He does not contrive for her any new beauty which was not formerly there;

⁵²Ibid., 63

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid., 91. See also Gregorii, *Canticum*, 100.

⁵⁵Ibid.

rather, He leads her back to her first grace by removing what was blackened through evil, changing her color to one which is not defiled.⁵⁶

A spiritually black soul, deformed, unnatural, and defiling, requires salvation or beautification, namely, the return to the pristine beauty of the soul by the removal of the grime of sin. To illustrate the soul's purification, Gregory returns to the analogy of the goldsmith. Just as adulterated gold needs to undergo multiple purifications by fire to restore it to its unalloyed state, so the sinful soul requires repeated purifications, before one can cleanse it from all stain of sin and restore it to its natural state of beauty: "So too the attendant of the blackened gold, i.e., the Bridegroom, has brightened the soul by a kind of refining process through the application of his remedies."⁵⁷ So Gregory develops here the themes of divine love and salvation as beautification, which involve a change from darkness to brightness through the analogy of the refinement of gold.

In summary, then, salvation, for Gregory, means the restoration of the soul's original state. Put in the terms of the Song, salvation means beautification, and beautification entails changing from black to white: "The Song teaches by these words about the restoration of beauty which the Bride gained by approaching the true beauty from which she has departed."⁵⁸ The Origenistic theme of the fall and return of souls informs Gregory's soteriology. Beauty forms Gregory's central soteriological category, which he deploys throughout his commentary. In his exegesis of Song 1:15: "Behold, you are fair, my companion," Gregory alludes to Song 1:5 and succinctly articulates his theological anthropology and hamartiology, namely, the soul's primal beauty and its corruption through sin: "Formerly you were not fair. Having strayed from the archetypal beauty by association with vice, you became ugly."⁵⁹ The misuse of free will, he asserts, causes sin. Beauty remains the symbol for salvation, and ugliness remains the symbol for sin. Furthermore, beauty and ugliness correspond to whiteness and blackness, which constitute the defining features for each. So for Gregory the story of the Bride conveys deep anthropological and soteriological truth. He emphasizes not the soul's ontological dilemma (sin), but the divine love as expressed through its beautification (salvation).

In his interpretation of Song 1:5, Gregory consistently posits a symbolic matrix, wherein the Bride's blackness represents the soul's sinfulness. At first the soul pos-

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid. 92. The soul functions like a mirror that reflects whatever it is exposed to, according to Gregory. By turning away from evil the soul is able to become beautiful by reflecting the Beautiful One: "So too the soul, when cleansed by the Word from vice, it receives within itself the sun's orb and shines with this reflected light. Therefore, the Word says to his Bride: 'You have become beautiful by approaching my light; by drawing near to me, you have attained communion with my beauty'" (93).

⁵⁹Ibid., 92.

sessed a beautiful quality expressed by the metaphor of whiteness or brightness. But once sin corrupted its original beauty, it developed an ugly quality expressed by the metaphor of darkness or blackness. Since sinfulness and temptation lurk outside of God's original creation, ugliness must ultimately have a satanic origin, although that begs the question of the origin of Satan.⁶⁰ At any rate, darkness, for Gregory, is antithetical to beauty; I have noted the detrimental implications of this symbolism for racial discourse and will expand on them momentarily. Moreover, Gregory considers the quality of blackness unnatural, since souls originated "golden" or bright, and their salvation consists of returning to that state. At bottom, then, the passage speaks to the nature of sin and salvation: "The Song of Songs then speaks about our transformation from a good color (εὐχροίας) to blackness (μέλαν)." ⁶¹ Gregory, however, cautions against interpreting the words in the Song "very precisely," recommending instead a symbolic hermeneutic.⁶² One must read the racial categories presented in Song 1:5 allegorically, not literally, in order to avoid detrimental misapprehensions and misapplications.

■ Black Theology and the Soteriological Foci of Song 1:5

We must now ask whether or not Origen and Gregory's allegorical interpretations withstand the searching critiques of black theology. But before we embark on this stage of the argument, we must raise an important methodological question: is it fair to evaluate their exegesis from a modern hermeneutical and theological perspective? We must bear in mind that modern racism and a "black theology," sensitive to the problem of racism and exploitation in recent history, did not exist in antiquity in the same way that it does for contemporary society. From the outset, then, we must vigilantly avoid anachronistically assessing their racial discourse by standards that they could not possibly meet. As I mentioned in the introduction, all exegesis remains deeply contextual, and so we cannot expect Origen and Gregory to treat this racially charged material with the critical nuance of a modern exegete. They attended to the social and theological problems of their time and particularly to Jewish-Christian relations and the doctrine of salvation. In light of this, I would consider it unfair and misguided to subject them to modern critical standards.

Although we must avoid anachronistic judgments, we may nonetheless ask probing questions about the racial implications and undercurrents of their exegesis. Can one justify their use of racial metaphors? Does their treatment of this verse promote or reinforce racial prejudices? I submit that Origen and Gregory interpret Song 1:5 soteriologically, not racially, which demonstrates both their ability to transcend these racial categories and their appropriation of negative black symbolism. For Origen, the condition of blackness denotes, not a negative physical state, but a nega-

⁶⁰The origin of evil must lay in the privation of the good, since everything God creates is good.

⁶¹Ibid., 63.

⁶²Ibid. 63–64.

tive spiritual state. He does not equate black pigmentation with ugliness, because the quality of blackness constitutes simply a metaphorical description of the soul's sinful state: it in no way indicates or promotes any anti-black sentiment. It would not occur to him to make an aesthetical judgment of colored bodies, since he seeks only to ascertain the spiritual sense of blackness. In fact, he plainly avers: "She [the Bride] is not speaking of bodily blackness."⁶³ The darkness of the Bride functions merely as his point of entry for reflecting on the purification of the Gentile church and the soul from a state of sin to a state of salvation. His employment of racial categories was a matter of textual necessity rather than personal preference. Given the presence of these categories, however, he does not use them as an occasion to legitimize racial stereotypes but rather to see in the narrative profound ecumenical truths about the movement from sin to salvation. Origen thus transcends these racial categories by transposing the context from the physical to the spiritual. True beauty for him remains a condition, not of the body, but of the soul.

But this explanation does not imply that Origen's exegesis is completely free of negative racial symbolism. In his *Homilies on Jeremiah* Origen adduces Song 1:5 within a wider commentary on Jeremiah 13:11. Just as the linen mentioned in this verse appears dark at the beginning but becomes bright through effort, so the soul appears dark at the start of its purification but eventually becomes cleansed: "We are dark at the beginning in believing—hence in the beginning of the Canticum of Canticles it is said, *I am very dark and beautiful*, and we look like the soul of an Ethiopian at the beginning."⁶⁴ What does Origen mean by looking like τὴν ψυχὴν Αἰθίοψιν?⁶⁵ He seems to suggest that the souls of Ethiopians, not simply the Bride, correspond to their skin color, with the implication that black people have black souls. Although the absence of the definite article suggests that he means all Ethiopians, it seems more plausible, given his explicit reference to Song 1:5, that he limits the ascription of a blackened soul to the Bride. In any case, this condition of blackness precedes the soul's purification through baptism and enlightenment: "Then we are cleansed so that we may be more bright according to the passage, *Who is she who comes up whitened* (Song 8:5)?"⁶⁶ Blackness, as the color of the earth, must become more white and bright (λαμπρότεροι), before the soul becomes worthy "to cling to God" (κολᾶσθαι τῷ θεῷ), which coheres with his notion of the progressive purification of the soul. In contrast to his commentary, however, he seems to draw a more explicit correspondence between black skin and a black (i.e., sinful) soul.

⁶³Origen, *Commentary* 11.2, 107.

⁶⁴Origen, *Homily* 11.6.3, from Origen, *Homilies on Jeremiah, Homily on 1 Kings* 28 (trans. John Clark Smith; The Fathers of the Church 97; Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1998) 109.

⁶⁵Origen, *Homélie sur Jérémie I–XI* (trans. Pierre Husson and Pierre Nautin; Sources chrétiennes 323; Paris: Cerf, 1976) 430.

⁶⁶Origen, *Homilies on Jeremiah*, 11.6.3, 109.

Origen's exegesis of Song 1:6 evinces the most racially offensive material in his commentary, although he does not expressly disparage black skin. While expounding on the allegorical meaning of this verse, he parenthetically discusses the natural origin of physical blackness. He comments that "the Ethiopian race" became black through prolonged exposure to the intense rays of the sun. Originally, he tacitly argues, white Ethiopians became black, departing from their natural hue, only after being "scorched and darkened." Once darkened, the Ethiopians transmit their "congenital stain" to their progeny.⁶⁷ To classify blackness as a natural deformity rather than as an expression of divine creativity reveals a parochial view of blackness. In these deliberations Origen presupposes whiteness as the natural condition of humanity and blackness as an anomalous state that arises afterwards. These assumptions make black pigmentation an ailment that one must overcome, if one can invert the analogy to spiritual blackness to apply to physical blackness. By making blackness a negative physical quality, Origen reveals the extent to which he has internalized the ethnocentric views of his socio-historical context. The theologian must then ask how this ethnocentrism informs his theology and later theology as well. These opinions shape his allegorical interpretation of the Bride's blackness and explain why spiritual blackness has negative symbolic connotations.

On a more promising note, however, Origen's mystical interpretation posits an anthropology that negates racial and ethnic differences. He attempts to express the fundamental unity of humanity despite these distinctions, as I alluded to above: "For in me too there is that primal thing, the Image of God, wherein I was created; and, coming now to the Word of God, I have received my beauty."⁶⁸ His theological anthropology constitutes a salutary starting point for understanding the theological significance of race and ethnicity. If God created all humans in the image of God, then each person, regardless of his or her racial or ethnic identity, reflects (albeit imperfectly) the beauty of divinity. Skin color cannot diminish or enhance this inner beauty. Moreover, although one's dark or light hue might comprise a feature of one's physical beauty, the real locus of beauty lies in the state of the soul, which all share equally. As one grows in Christ, the soul becomes more beautified and less marred by the effects of sin, which thus deepens the correspondence between one's created capacity and existential reality. Hence, Origen's universal anthropological ground for salvific purification transcends racial categories by privileging spiritual unity over physical differentiation. Frank Snowden affirms that Origen exhibited no hostile opinions against blacks and actually fostered a "highly favorable view

⁶⁷Ibid., 107.

⁶⁸Origen, *Commentary*, II.1, 92. Norris, *The Song of Songs*, 39. Norris translates this passage as follows: "For in me what is most elemental and deep-seated is that which has been made after the image of God; and now drawing near to the Word of God I have recovered my beauteous appearance."

of blacks.”⁶⁹ Nevertheless, Origen does appropriate an ancient view of race even in his allegorical interpretation: “In his language of spiritual blackness and whiteness Origen’s adaptation of the Greco-Roman back-white imagery is clear, but equally clear is his indebtedness to classical themes of black-white contrast.”⁷⁰ In this way Origen overcomes anti-black sentiments latent within these polarities.⁷¹ But he does not, *pace* Snowden, entirely wrest himself free of all negative attitudes. Nevertheless, he makes great strides in that direction.

Gregory also employs racial categories in his homiletic exegesis of the Song but, like Origen, he uses them not to promote or reinforce racism but to illustrate deep spiritual truth. He probes beyond the surface meaning, and, as with Origen, does more than merely equate blackness with sin. The soul’s blackness only marks the beginning of the knowledge disclosed by this verse. For Gregory, the essential point remains not the sinfulness of the soul but the love of God who transforms the soul’s ugliness into beauty: “The Bride further speaks to her pupils of an amazing fact about herself in order that we might learn of the Bridegroom’s immense love for mankind who added beauty to the beloved [Bride] through such love.”⁷² More than simply diagnosing the problem, Gregory’s exegesis celebrates the solution to sin: the beautification of the soul through Christ. God demonstrates the depth of divine love by loving humanity despite their sin and by emptying Godself for its amelioration. This verse, then, far from merely appropriating negative and antiquated assumptions about blackness, uses the given racial categories of the narrative to illustrate and to extol the magnitude of God’s love. He transforms what one might justifiably perceive as a relic of ancient bigotry into an ode to God’s love for lost souls. Thus, Gregory shifts the focus from the negative connotations associated with black skin to the spiritual reality of the sinfulness of humanity and the salvation afforded by God.

The theological affirmation of God’s love combines with his soteriological emphasis on the soul’s beautification. Gregory expresses his soteriological viewpoint through the analogy of the Bride’s transformation from blackness to beauty, which corresponds to the soul’s transformation from sin to salvation. He characterizes the soul’s purification as an exchange, whereby Christ imparts his beauty to the soul and assumes the sin of the soul.⁷³ Two important passages underpin his soteriology:

⁶⁹Frank Snowden, *Before Color Prejudice: The Ancient View of Blacks* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983) 66.

⁷⁰Snowden, 103.

⁷¹Snowden, 101.

⁷²Gregory, *Fourth Homily*, 60.

⁷³*Ibid.*, 60–61, 67. This idea anticipates what Luther later called the “great exchange” between the soul and Christ whereby Christ’s righteousness becomes ours, and our sinfulness becomes his. In Luther’s *Two Kinds of Righteousness* and *The Freedom of a Christian* he illustrates his soteriology by employing the Song of Songs’ portrayal of the love between married lovers (e.g., *TKR*, 297; *FC*, 351). In a marriage union all that belongs to the Bridegroom is given to the Bride, and *vice versa* (*TKR*, 297). Likewise, according to Luther, all that belongs to Christ belongs to the Christian and

the Suffering Servant song in Isaiah 53 and the hymn to Christ in Philippians 2. He does not explicate the mechanics of this exchange between the soul and Christ, but the main lines of his conception appear clear. God the Son descends into the human condition, assumes humanity's sinfulness, and purifies the soul from sin by filling it with his beauty and making it lovely.⁷⁴ He enlightens the previously "black in color" souls.⁷⁵

Though tempting, it would be anachronistic to cast Origen and Gregory as nascent black theologians. But it would also be anachronistic to cast them as anti-black. The situation is more complex than either option suggests. Origen and Gregory exhibited favorable attitudes toward blackness, but they also reflected negative attitudes.⁷⁶ I submit that they transcended these categories by denying their ultimate significance and by utilizing them to convey profound soteriological truth. Nevertheless, for the modern reader, the association between blackness and sin and whiteness and salvation remains problematic. One can mitigate the force of this objection by highlighting their shared sense of a common theological anthropology, whereby the souls of all people, regardless of skin color, reflect "the image of God" (as Origen writes) and share an "archetypal beauty" (so Gregory), before they fall into sin. Moreover, with Snowden, one could praise them for their ecumenical and global conception of salvation: "Origen and his exegetical disciples made it clear that all men, regardless of the color of their skin, were called to faith, and in their interpretations they employed a deeply spiritualized black-white imagery."⁷⁷ The problem remains, however, that symbolic associations between blackness and sin carry over to the physical realm and engender negative racial attitudes. They certainly did not intend this—and Snowden correctly notes that "skin color did not give rise to a marked antipathy toward blacks and did not evoke negative reactions in the domain of social behavior"—but it nevertheless follows as an unintended consequence.⁷⁸

all that belongs to the Christian belongs to Christ. The union between the soul and Christ entails an exchange of attributes whereby Christ's "grace, life, and salvation" becomes the soul's while "sin, death, and damnation," which belong to the soul, becomes Christ's (*FC*, 351).

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 60.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 61.

⁷⁶Gregory's positive attitude toward darkness is expressly seen in his *Life of Moses*, where Moses sees God in the darkness, which signifies "the unknown and unseen" (96). Darkness is the condition for spiritual enlightenment: "What is now recounted seems somehow to be contradictory to the first theophany, for then the Divine was beheld in light but now he is seen in darkness." Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses* (trans. Abraham J. Malherbe and Everett Ferguson; New York: Paulist Press, 1978) 95.

⁷⁷Snowden, *Before Color Prejudice*, 107.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*

■ Origen and Gregory of Nyssa: The First Apostles of Blackness?

Black theology raises salient criticisms about the stigma attached to blackness and the concomitant fusion of the physical with the moral and ontological. Within the context of the patristic period, Robert Hood remarks that the church appropriated the dominant cultural attitudes toward “blacks and blackness”: “During the formative years of the Christian church in the Roman Empire, blackness not only had a distinctive negative connotation, but also was personalized as the devil.”⁷⁹ The church expressed spiritual categories in terms of shade and color polarities, where light and white signified spirit and divine goodness, and dark and black signified materiality and evil. Hood further comments that these categories filtered into the patristic exegesis of Song 1:5, which intentionally deviates from the Septuagint nuance of the verse because of a widespread uneasiness about the correlation between blackness and beauty:

The Greek-language Septuagint translated the Hebrew ‘I am black *and* beautiful’; the Latin Vulgate by Jerome resisted the theological implications of the Greek *Nigra sum et pulchra* and instead renders it in the Latin *Nigra sum sed formosa*: ‘I am black but comely’ (or ‘beautifully formed’). (Cf. RSV: ‘I am very dark, but comely.’)⁸⁰

Hood extols Origen as the “first apostle of blackness” because he transforms blackness into a positive witness to salvation in his commentaries and homilies on the Song of Songs.⁸¹ Hood’s insight into Origen could equally apply to Gregory, who also redeployed black imagery to positive ends. In contrast with Hood, Frank Snowden argues that we have no evidence of racial prejudice in the ancient world: “The ancient world did not make color the focus of irrational sentiments or the basis for uncritical evaluation . . . nothing comparable to the virulent color prejudice of modern times existed in the ancient world.”⁸² Snowden rightly affirms the fact that “the ancients did not fall into the error of biological racism; black skin color was not a sign of inferiority,” but, conversely, Hood rightly affirms that we do have evidence of negative connotations associated with blackness.⁸³ After studying Origen and Gregory’s interpretation of Song 1:5, we may conclude that Hood’s thesis about the early church’s attitude toward blacks seems too pessimistic, while Snowden’s appears too optimistic—the truth lies somewhere in between. Origen and Gregory at once exhibit negative attitudes toward blackness and positive attitudes toward the salvific import of black imagery. Our analysis shows that while we cannot classify Origen and Gregory as “the first apostles of blackness,”

⁷⁹Robert E. Hood, *Begrimed and Black: Christian Traditions on Blacks and Blackness* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994) 73.

⁸⁰Hood, 75.

⁸¹Idem., 18, 80.

⁸²Snowden, *Before Color Prejudice*, 63.

⁸³Ibid.

we may nonetheless recognize their positive employment of the racial categories inherent in this verse, despite the fact that the very use of these categories involves problematic assumptions. For Origen the black Bride corresponds primarily to the Gentile church and his central metaphor for salvation is purification. For Gregory the Bride corresponds primarily to the soul and his central metaphor for salvation is beautification. For both the racial categories in Song 1:5 are a gateway to profound soteriological truth, not racism.

■ Conclusion

When the church fathers read the Song of Songs, they perceived deep theological truths beneath the surface narrative. The passionate nuptial relationship detailed in the story, often in overtly erotic terms, became in the industrious hands of the Fathers an allegory of Christ's relationship to the soul and the church. Origen and Gregory exemplify this hermeneutical trajectory and while some might characterize their homilies and commentaries on the Song of Songs as eisegesis rather than exegesis, their speculative flights nonetheless have captured the imagination of generations of exegetes. By treating Origen and Gregory together in this essay I do not mean to elide their differences. As I stated above, they have disparate symbolic emphases. Nevertheless, their exegesis of the Song of Songs evinces remarkable similarities. With respect to Song 1:5, they both affirm the soteriological significance of the Bride's blackness, though with slightly different nuances. For both, the story manifests divine grace in symbolic shades. Once the symbolism of these shades of grace comes into view, the potentially offensive racial aspects of the narrative become less problematic, though not altogether obsolete. In this way, Origen and Gregory's soteriological exegesis of the racially charged language in this verse opens up new exegetical pathways for black theology. It also provides a new imaginative context for Christian theology to conceive of divine love and salvation.

Athanasius, the Psalms, and the Reformation of the Self

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Shortly after his death, the influential fourth century bishop, Athanasius of Alexandria, was recognized for introducing the contemplative traditions of the Egyptian monks to the urban Christians of Alexandria and for bringing the desert monks into communion with the Alexandrian episcopacy.¹ Athanasius accomplished this by quite intentionally bridging the distance—physical and spiritual—between desert and city. Over time, with his tireless effort, the daily spiritual practices of the monks became those of the urban Christian and the monks came increasingly under the sway of the Alexandrian episcopacy. As a consequence of his commitment to bringing the desert closer to the city, Athanasius thoroughly integrated ascetic practice into his theology and it proved to be a decisive component of his ecclesiastical politics.² A letter Athanasius wrote to a certain Marcellinus provides valuable insight into the shape of Athanasius's spiritual program, its relationship to previous Hellenistic philosophical traditions, and, especially, the crucial function of the psalms in the reformation of the self.

Although the letter provides no details concerning Marcellinus's identity, he was, in all likelihood, one of the urban Christians adopting the ascetic practices

¹Gregory Nazianzus, *Orationes* 21.19–20 (ed. J. Mossay; Sources chrétiennes (SC) 270; Paris: Cerf, 1980) 148–53.

²See David Brakke's *Athanasius and Asceticism* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998). Susanna Elm concludes, "Athanasius used his interpretation of 'rural' Egyptian asceticism to control and organize inner-urban asceticism, and it was his modified form of pseudo-'rural' ascetic life, created in response to urban requirements, that was then exported to the West; but it was also reintroduced into the rural environment to control and organize the original, 'rural,' ascetic movement according to its ideals" (*Virgins of God: The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994] 371).

Athanasius promoted. In fact, Athanasius began his letter by congratulating Marcellinus on maintaining his spiritual practice (ἄσκησις), and then proceeded to provide a sustained reflection upon the use of the Psalter in the Christian life.³ It is not surprising that Athanasius directed his discussion of ἄσκησις to the Psalter, since he had elsewhere already represented the psalms as a crucial component of Antony's training. In his account of the famed monk's physical and spiritual struggles, Athanasius described how Antony so perfected the use of the Psalter that the demons wailed and cried out as though severely weakened whenever he would chant psalms.⁴

The sort of letter that Athanasius wrote to Marcellinus was, in fact, quite common in late antiquity.⁵ It had become fashionable for Christians and non-Christians alike voluntarily to take time to devote themselves to training that would further their spiritual progress. This training took the form of a daily struggle with their own humanity that was not unlike that undertaken by those first Christian ascetics in the desert who battled their own passions and demons. The orator Dio Chrysostom was not atypical in describing the attempt to live a truly admirable life as a more stubborn battle than that fought by famed Spartan warriors.⁶ In a similar fashion, the noble senator Seneca advised the young Lucilius that he was commending to him a way of life that was itself a battle, and that he should approach this struggle with his own passions as any trained soldier would a war.⁷

Representatives of the Hellenistic philosophical schools were particularly aware of the manifold resistance that human beings face in committing to the philosophic life. Cicero lamented that "as soon as we come into the light of day . . . we at once find ourselves in a world of iniquity amid a medley of wrong beliefs, so that it seems as if we drank in deception with our nurse's milk."⁸ A century later Seneca

³Athanasius, *Epistola ad Marcellinum* 1 (ed. J. P. Migne; *Patrologia graeca* (PG) 27; Paris, 1886)12a. All citations, except where noted otherwise, are from the translation of Robert C. Gregg, in *Athanasius: The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus* (Classics of Western Spirituality; New York: Paulist Press, 1980). Two other English translations that include prefatory comments are available: one by Pamela Bright in *Early Christian Spirituality* (ed. Charles Kannengiesser; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986) 56–77; the other by Everett Ferguson, *Ekklesiastikos Pharos* 60 (1978) 378–403.

⁴Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 39.6 (SC 400:242). On *Ep. Marcell.* as a work of the mature Athanasius, see Herman-Joseph Sieben, "Athanasius über den Psalter: Analyse seines Briefes an Marcellinus," *Theologie und Philosophie* 48 (1973) 157. Athanasius describes Antony as devoting himself to "exercise (ἄσκησις) rather than the household, attending (προσέχω) to himself and patiently training (ἄγων) himself" (*Vit. Ant.* 3.1 [SC 400:136.7–9]). Antony later encourages others to do the same (*Vit. Ant.* 19).

⁵Athanasius wrote a number of other letters, including his annual "festal" letter to the Egyptian Christians, advocating, among other things, various spiritual practices.

⁶Dio Chrysostom, *Orationes* 77/78.40 (trans. H. Lamar Crosby; LCL 385 [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964] 296).

⁷Seneca, *Epistulae morales* 37.1 (trans. Richard M. Gummere; LCL 75:252–54), 96.5 (LCL 77:106).

⁸Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes*. 3.1.2 (trans. J. E. King; LCL 141:226); see also 5.27.78 (LCL 141:504–6).

remarked, “We are not allowed to travel the straight road,” for those with whom we associate “draw us into wrong” so that the “vices of the nations” are “heaped upon” the individual.⁹ The manner in which false beliefs and popular customs combine to form habits deeply ingrained in both mind and body was a prevalent concern of the time.

Part of the reason that a philosophic education was valued in the Hellenistic world was that it ideally enabled one to cultivate an inner core of the self that provided one with enough stability to withstand the onslaught of temptation and tragedy.¹⁰ This required a long process of training that amounted to far more than a mere facility in handling dialectical syllogisms or knowledge of some true axioms.¹¹ The person who learned doctrines without going to the trouble to live them was dismissed as a mere “sophist.”¹² Seneca calls attention to the need for “something stronger than usual” to “shake off these chronic ills,” and “root out our deep-seated belief in wrong ideas.”¹³ The self was thought to require a daily practice that would facilitate the internalization of true doctrines that would overcome both our false beliefs and the mental, physical, and emotional habits stemming from them.¹⁴ Specific disciplines, therefore, were “designed to ensure spiritual progress toward the ideal state of wisdom” however defined by a particular school of philosophy, by exercising the faculties of reason and will in a manner “analogous to the athlete’s training or the application of a medical cure.”¹⁵

⁹Seneca, *Ep.* 94.54–55 (LCL 77:44–46).

¹⁰See Gretchen Reydam-Schils, “Roman and Stoic: the Self as a Mediator,” *Dionysius* 16 (1998) 35–62; eadem, *The Roman Stoics: Self, Responsibility, and Affection* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

¹¹Seneca, *Ep.* 94.69 (LCL 77:54). Musonius Rufus speaks of the “longer and more thorough training” that philosophy requires, since its students have been “born and reared in an environment filled with corruption and evil” (Cora E. Lutz, *Musonius Rufus: “The Roman Socrates,”* [Yale Classical Studies, 10; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947] 52–54).

¹²Maximus Tyrius, *Dissertationes* 27.8 (ed. Michael B. Trapp; Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana; Stuttgartiae: B. G. Teubner, 1994) 159–68.

¹³Seneca, *Ep.* 95.34 (LCL 77:78).

¹⁴Seneca, *Ep.* 95.34–35 (LCL 77:78).

¹⁵Pierre Hadot, “Forms of Life and Forms of Discourse,” in *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (ed. A. Davidson; trans. M. Chase; Cambridge: Blackwell, 1995) 59. Asceticism, nonetheless, is a term that had a long history even by the time of Athanasius. On such philosophical exercises, see also Hadot’s *The Inner Citadel: The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius* (trans. M. Chase; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998) esp. 35–53; as well as his *What is Ancient Philosophy?* (trans. M. Chase; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); Paul Rabbow, *Seelenführung: Methodik der Exerzitien in der Antike* (Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 1954); Robert J. Newman, “*Cotidie Meditare*. Theory and Practice of the *meditatio* in Imperial Stoicism,” *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2.36.3 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989) 1473–1517; Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1994); B. L. Hijmans, *Askesis: Notes on Epictetus’ Educational System* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1959). Michel Foucault has commented notably on this tradition. He describes “technologies of the self” by which people intentionally “not only set themselves rules of conduct, but also seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make their life

Such spiritual exercises required, above all, the “memorization and assimilation of the fundamental dogmas and rules of life of the school.”¹⁶ Through the recitation of doctrines, participants in such exercises were taught, as it were, to find themselves in the words of others. When these doctrines were reiterated continually in a persuasive form, they were thought to have the potential to “form” (*formant*) the soul, so that its emotions flowed from studied convictions rather than being driven by the whims of self-interest in any particular moment.¹⁷ The internalization of these dogmas ideally led to a transformation of those striving to make spiritual progress as the form of life implied in the school’s teaching gradually took on existential reality for them.¹⁸ With some confidence in such methods, Seneca taught that “no affections are so fierce and self-willed that they cannot be tamed by training.”¹⁹

Philosophy was then, in this way, to be embodied in the life of the philosopher, who ideally displayed complete harmony between beliefs and deeds.²⁰ Paraenetic let-

into an *œuvre* that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria” (*The History of Sexuality* [trans. Robert Hurley; 3 vols.; New York: Random House, 1985] 2:10–11). Elsewhere he refers to “technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality” (“Technologies of the Self,” in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault* [eds. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton; Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1988] 18). Pierre Hadot has criticized the historical accuracy of Foucault’s work as overemphasizing “self” at the expense of the importance this tradition has historically ascribed to conforming the self to universal principles of nature (“Reflections on the idea of ‘Cultivation of the Self,’” in *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 206–13). Charles Taylor is similarly critical of Foucault’s proposals and insightfully examines the positive and negative implications of the more classical view represented by Athanasius, among others, which understands selfhood as achieved by conforming oneself to a preexistent ideal (*Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989] 488–90, 518–21).

¹⁶Hadot, “Forms of Life,” 59; see also his *Inner Citadel*, 51. The *Kuriai Doxai* of Epicurus are the most conspicuous example from antiquity; see Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, 10.139–54 (trans. R. D. Hicks; LCL 185:662–76). In his *Letter to Herodotus*, Epicurus says that “mental tranquility means being released from all these troubles and retaining constantly in memory the general and most important principles (κυριωτάτων),” (Diogenes Laertius, 10.82 [LCL 185: 610]). Musonius Rufus refers to “habituating” (ἐθίζεσθαι) oneself to act according to the principles of a particular teaching (λόγου) (Fr. 5 [Lutz 50]). Epictetus observes, “It is not easy for a person to acquire a proper judgment (δόγμα), unless each day the same principles are said and heard, and at the same time applied to life” (Frg. 16 [trans. W. A. Oldfather; LCL 218:460]). Marcus Aurelius exhorts himself to always have his “doctrines” (δόγματα) ready, just as physicians have their instruments always “in hand” (πρόχειρα) (*De rebus suis* 3.13 [trans. C. R. Haines; LCL 58:60]).

¹⁷Seneca, *Ep.* 94.47 (LCL 77:40); See Dio Chrysostom’s description of how “doctrines abide in the soul” (δόγματα ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ) of one who has received “a good education” (ἀγαθῆς παιδείας) (*Or.* 4.31–2 [LCL 257:182]).

¹⁸See Seneca, “One who has learned and understood what he should do and avoid, is not a wise man until his mind is metamorphosed (*transfiguratus*) into the shape of that which he has learned” (*Ep.* 94.48 [LCL 77:42]).

¹⁹Seneca, *De ira* 2.12.3 (trans. John W. Basore; LCL 214:192).

²⁰Seneca is typical: “Let speech harmonize with life. That man has fulfilled his promise who is the same person both when you see him and when you hear him” (*Ep.* 75.4 [LCL 76:138]).

ters of instruction, like those of Seneca, describing effective spiritual exercises were greatly valued in late antiquity by Christian and non-Christian alike.²¹ Christians not only shared with their philosophically inclined contemporaries the perception that the moral life was best thought of as a battle or ongoing struggle, but also shared assumptions with them about what sorts of disciplines were necessary if one were going to make spiritual progress.

Athanasius's letter can best be understood within this context as commending a daily regime of Psalms to be taken on voluntarily as spiritual exercises to conform the self to a certain ideal. Athanasius describes the use of Psalms in language similar to the spiritual exercises found among the Hellenistic philosophical schools. He asserts that the recitation of Psalms is a way of "attending" or "caring for oneself" (προσέχω σεαυτοῦ).²² The Psalms are a tool that one uses "to form" or "model oneself" (τυπῶ ἑαυτὸν).²³ Indeed, for Athanasius the Psalms are an essential part of Christian discipline because of their unparalleled usefulness in the care of self. This is most evident in the practical advice he offers Marcellinus.

His letter sheds light on what Athanasius considered spiritual exercises to entail, what he intended them to accomplish, and why he believed the Psalms particularly suitable for this task. Athanasius claims that he is not the originator of his advice, but merely relaying wisdom that he learned from an old man who was a "master of the Psalter."²⁴ This is likely a literary device allowing Athanasius to refrain from speaking in his own name, and, strictly speaking, this letter provides evidence only for Athanasius's teaching on the Psalter.²⁵ Athanasius's allusion, nonetheless, may well refer to one of the monks with whom he became acquainted during his multiple trips and exiles into the Egyptian desert or to an anonymous urban teacher. Given that other sources attest to the widespread use of the Psalms among the Christians of late antiquity, and that there was clearly a "reciprocity between Athanasius and

Philo describes how Moses "demonstrated his philosophical doctrines (δόγματα) by his daily actions, saying what he thought and acting according to his words, so that speech and life were in harmony, and thus life (βίος) was found to be like the speech (λόγος) and the speech like the life, just like those who play together [in tune] on a musical instrument (*De vita Moysis* 1.29 [trans. F. H. Colson; LCL 289:290]).

²¹For example, see Seneca, *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium*; Porphyry, *Ad Marcellam*; and the texts made available by Abraham J. Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988).

²²Athanasius, *Ep. Marcell.* 19 (PG 27:32b). Athanasius also uses this phrase in *Vit. Ant.* 3.1; 27.4; 91.3. Porphyry extols Plotinus's continual "attention to himself" (πρὸς ἑαυτὸν προσοχὴν) (*Vita Plotini* 8:20–21 [trans. A. H. Armstrong; *Plotinus*; LCL 440:30–31]). Finding the phrase in Deut 15:9 (LXX), Basil devoted a homily to the subject (PG 31:197c–217b). See Hadot's comments on what he describes as "a technical term of ancient philosophy," in "Ancient Spiritual Exercises and 'Christian Philosophy,'" in *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 130–40.

²³Athanasius, *Ep. Marcell.* 10 (PG 27:20c).

²⁴*Ibid.* 1 (PG 27:12a).

²⁵Sieben, "Athanasius über den Psalter," 157.

the ascetic movement of his time,”²⁶ it is not unlikely that Athanasius is making available to a broader constituency at least aspects of traditions that bear some resemblance to practices he had himself witnessed.

Even in this letter, however, there is evidence that not all agreed with every aspect of Athanasius’s program.²⁷ The recitation of psalms, like other instances of the spiritual exercise tradition, admitted different kinds of instruction, influenced by the diversity of piety among practitioners. Since doctrines occupy such a central place in this tradition by providing the soul with reliable guidance, it is all the more necessary first to establish what these doctrines were for Athanasius, and locate the theological framework that directs the particular pastoral instructions given to Marcellinus. When seen in terms of these doctrinal convictions, Athanasius’s contention becomes more intelligible that the Psalter furnishes exercises capable of reforming the disordered movements of the soul through speaking, acting, and singing.

■ Psalms as a Means for Appropriating Revelatory Knowledge of Both Christ and the Soul

Throughout his writings, Athanasius stresses his conviction that the universe exists exclusively through God’s eternal Logos, and continues to persist only to the extent that it conforms to the Logos. He repeatedly underscores that God the creator remains categorically distinct from all else. Creatures were made from nothing (οὐκ ὄντων), and by definition have no internal means by which to sustain their existence. All creation relies continually on the power of the eternal God for its existence and sustenance. Furthermore, all creation retains a potency for

²⁶Charles Kannengiesser, “Athanasius of Alexandria and the Ascetic Movement of His Time,” in *Asceticism* (eds. Vincent L. Wimbush and Richard Valantasis; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) 479. See also Elm, *Virgins of God*, 331–72. The daily recitation of the Psalms is widely attested in the writings of early Christians. It is commonly referred to in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*. One saying of Abba Epiphanius asserts that “The true monk should have prayer and psalmody continually in his heart” (Epiphanius 3 [PG 65:164c] trans. Benedicta Ward, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection* [Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1975] 57). Douglas Burton-Christie describes the consensus that “the most frequently cited Old Testament texts [in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*] are the Psalms” (*The Word in the Desert: Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993] 97). Theodoret of Cyrrhus describes Syrian monks vocalizing Psalms from early morning to late afternoon during daily walks into the desert (*Historia religiosa* 2.5 [SC 234:204–6]). Cyril of Scythopolis indicates that the learning of the Psalms was an essential skill that Sabbas required novices in Palestine to master before they could move from the *cenobium* to the *laura* (*Lives of the Monks of Palestine* [trans. R. M. Price; Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1991] 113.1–20). The practice was also integral to Cappadocian asceticism. See Basil’s *Homiliae in Psalmos* (PG 29:209–493), his *Regulae fusius tractatae* 37 (PG 31:1009c–1016c), and Gregory of Nyssa’s *In inscriptiones Psalmorum* (SC 466).

²⁷Athanasius refers to “some of the simple among us” who mistakenly consider music of the Psalms to be “for the sake of the ear’s delight” (*Ep. Marcell.* 27 [PG 27:37d]); and implies that

nonbeing (οὐκ ὄντων), and risks passing out of existence if separated from the source of its being. For example, Athanasius states, “the nature of created things, having come into being from nothing, is unstable, and is weak and mortal when considered by itself.”²⁸

Athanasius, however, often follows such statements with an equal emphasis on God’s continual sustenance of creation. Indeed, he asserts that “the God of all is good” and does not “resent (φθονεῖ) the existence of any,” but “desires all to exist,” so that they may benefit from God’s “loving kindness” (φιλανθρωπεύεσθαι).²⁹ For Athanasius, God’s goodness is manifested in the manner in which God created everything through the divine Word, who is the “orderer” (κατορθώματος) of the universe.³⁰ “The Word of God gives light and life, moving (κινεῖ) and ordering” (διακοσμεῖ) the universe. By the “providence” of the Logos “bodies grow, the rational soul moves, and possesses life and thought.”³¹ Moreover, “all things subsist (συνέστηκε) through the Word of God,”³² and have life to the degree that they maintain the original movement given them. Hence, life and order imply one another, as the active ordering of the divine Logos is the source of all power and vitality.

Made in the image of God, the first man was given a certain power by the Logos that he could use to live a life in fellowship with God that was enduring and blessed.³³ His soul received from the Logos its own agency, having its own proper motion, and governance of the body. The first human was intended to have always held “his mind God-ward (πρὸς τὸν θεόν) in the boldest freedom” (παρρησίᾳ), to associate “with the holy ones in that contemplation” (θεωρίᾳ), and understand the manner in which all creation coheres in a single Logos. In this way, he was to have kept his soul in a state of such purity (τῆς ψυχῆς καθαρότης), that it would have been sufficient of itself to reflect God as in a mirror (κατοπτρίζεσθαι).³⁴

Athanasius accentuates the striking disjunction between these divine intentions for humanity and their human realization. Although intended to “abide” eternally with God,³⁵ human beings used the power derived from the Logos to turn away

there are others who “embellish the words of the Psalter with the persuasive phrases of the profane” (ibid. 31 [PG 27:41d]).

²⁸Athanasius, *Contra gentes* 41 (SC 18bis:188.18–20). See also, *De Incarnatione* 11 (SC 199bis:302). For earlier attestations to *creatio ex nihilo*, see Philo, *Legum allegoriae* 3.10 (LCL 226:306); Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 2.10.4 (SC 294:90); Origen, *De principiis* praef. 4 (SC 252:80).

²⁹*C. Gent.* 41 (SC 18bis:188.20–24); see Plato, *Timaeus* 29e (LCL 234:54).

³⁰*C. Gent.* 1 (SC 18bis:50.6).

³¹*C. Gent.* 44 (SC 18bis:198.7–16). See also *C. Gent.* 40–45 (SC 18bis:184–202).

³²*C. Gent.* 40 (SC 18bis:184.25–26). For further elaboration, see Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius: The Coherence of his Thought* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

³³*C. Gent.* 2 (SC 18bis:54.8–11).

³⁴*C. Gent.* 2 (SC 18bis:56.1–6). On the soul as a “mirror,” see Andrew Hamilton, “Athanasius and the Simile of the Mirror” *Vigiliae Christianae* 34 (1980) 14–18. His analysis, however, does not address Athanasius’s extension of this simile from the soul to the Scripture as discussed below.

³⁵μενῶ (*C. Gent.* 3 [SC 18bis:56.10]). A key term for Athanasius, which he repeats often; see its use in *Contra Arianos* 2.74 (PG 26:305a).

from the source of life. For Athanasius, the consequence for humanity of this turning from the Logos is a marked diminishment of the human person. In so doing human beings “forgot” (ἐπιλαθομένη) that they were in the image of the good God, and no longer by the power present in their souls could they see God the Word, in whose likeness they were made. Hence, the soul lost its mirror-function and “became hidden” (ἐπικρύψασα).³⁶ In this way, by turning from the intended order given it by God, the soul “departed from its [true] self.”³⁷

This human degeneration is most visible in the soul’s motion, since, for Athanasius, “the movement of the soul is nothing other than its life.”³⁸ The soul created by God to be in motion remains mobile even when misusing its powers.³⁹ Having discovered that it has a certain power over itself (αὐτεξούσιος),⁴⁰ that it can move the body in various ways, the soul came to believe that its “dignity” came merely from its ability to move, rather than from its ability “to move toward the term for which it was made.”⁴¹ This power of motion separated from the term of that motion subjected the soul to disordered movements, such as the passions that it suffers. Athanasius chronicles this condition by surveying humanity’s progressive descent into idolatry and vice.⁴²

Having turned their vision away from the living God, human beings have made the focus of their attention that which is nearer to themselves: the physical universe and its many sense impressions on the body. Yet, without knowledge of the Logos which orders the universe, people have been “carried about by everything,” and “imagine what has no existence.”⁴³ Instead of the singular vision of the life-giving God, humanity “formed a desire” for “many things” (πολλῶν), and “began to be habituated” (σκέσις) to such desires.⁴⁴ This resulted in a dispersion of the self, and a dissipation of its God-given agency. In its disordered state, the soul is far from the vital order intended by the Logos, lacking both the knowledge and the power necessary to reform itself. In short, for Athanasius, sin is the habitual choice of an alternate order other than the one God made: an artificial order that by definition can lead to nothing other than death, since it lacks any lasting ontological ground.

The erratic movements of soul that threaten its very existence only become ordered through the presence of the proper term of those motions. Each soul needs the eternal Logos to draw near to it. For this reason, although the whole cosmos still displays the design of the Creator, God descended to humanity’s diminished

³⁶*C. Gent.* 8 (SC 18bis:72.6–10).

³⁷ἔξω δὲ ἑαυτῆς γενομένη (*C. Gent.* 8 [SC 18bis:72.8–9]).

³⁸ἡ γὰρ κίνησις τῆς ψυχῆς οὐδὲν ἑτερόν ἐστιν ἢ ἡ ζωὴ αὐτῆς (*C. Gent.* 33 [SC 18bis:160.12–13]).

³⁹*C. Gent.* 4 (SC 18bis:60.3–5).

⁴⁰*C. Gent.* 4 (SC 18bis:60.8).

⁴¹οὐκ εἰδυῖα ὅτι ἀπλῶς κινεῖσθαι, ἀλλ’ εἰς ἃ δεῖ κινεῖσθαι γέγονε (*C. Gent.* 4 [SC 18bis: 628–11]).

⁴²*C. Gent.* 8–29.

⁴³*C. Gent.* 8 (SC 18bis:72.9–13).

⁴⁴*C. Gent.* 3 (SC 18bis:58.14–16).

condition, and took on a part of it, that is, the single body of Jesus. In taking as his own a single part, the truth about the whole once again became manifest: the contingency of the created universe oriented toward the Logos as its source of life and order. Athanasius asserts that the “unalterable” (ἄτρεπτος) Logos “took alterable (τρεπτήν) flesh, condemned sin in it,” and “secured its freedom (ἐλευθέραν) and its power (δύνασθαι) henceforth to fulfill the righteousness of the law.”⁴⁵ Christ took on the passion “that he might himself lighten these very sufferings of the flesh, and free it from them.”⁴⁶ Accordingly, the cross of Christ is the true “therapy of the created order.”⁴⁷

In this way, in his own transformed body, Christ revealed the truth about human beings, and showed the fullness of undiminished humanity in complete harmony with the Source of its being. The Logos, having drawn near in Jesus Christ, once again makes possible the task of realizing the divine intention: that is, of conforming oneself to the vivifying Logos; the soul renewing its agency and power, becoming truly itself for the first time, and moving toward complete stability in God. The interpreter of Athanasius’s letter should, therefore, be aware that Athanasius’s Nicene christology informs and shapes his advice to Marcellinus. Without this Christology, he would consider his advice to be no different from the mere “philosophy” Antony describes as having a degree of truth, but lacking power.⁴⁸ Likewise, according to Athanasius, an Arian Logos would share the creaturely potency for nonbeing, and thereby also lack the power to stabilize human existence.⁴⁹

Since the acute human disorder involves the loss of knowledge of God and of the self, Athanasius emphasizes that the Psalms are a source of revelatory knowledge of both Christ and the soul. Indeed, for this reason, he contends that there is a plenitude to the Psalms, such that the whole biblical revelation is available to the one who learns them with understanding. He likens the Psalter to “a garden” that contains all the other canonical books.⁵⁰ In the Psalms, one learns how “to remember” (ἀναμνησκεισθαι) the good works of God.⁵¹

Athanasius maintained that the actions of the self are reformed through imitation of the divine example, or variations of that example embodied by the saints. He tells Marcellinus that “the Lord . . . performed righteous acts, and not only made

⁴⁵*Orationes contra Arianos*, 1.51 (PG 26:120a).

⁴⁶*C. Ar.* 3.56 (PG 26:440c–441a). He can even speak of the flesh being “made Word” (λογωθεΐσης) (*C. Ar.* 3.33 [PG 26:396a]).

⁴⁷τὸν σταυρὸν μὴ βλάβην ἀλλὰ θεραπείαν τῆς κτίσεως γεγονέναι (*C. Gent.* 1 [SC 18bis: 48.11–12]).

⁴⁸*Vit. Ant.* 78. For the extensive influence that Athanasius’s Nicene commitments had upon his depiction of Antony’s asceticism, see Robert C. Gregg and Dennis E. Groh, *Early Arianism—A View of Salvation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981) 131–59.

⁴⁹“If the Son be a creature . . . no help (βοήθεια) will come to creatures from a creature, since all need grace from God” (*C. Ar.* 2.41 [PG 26:233b]; see also 2.67).

⁵⁰*Ep. Marcell.* 2 and 9. Note Basil’s similar comments in his homily on Psalm 1 (PG 29: 209a–212a).

⁵¹*Ep. Marcell.* 19 (PG 27:32c).

laws but offered himself as a model (τύπος) for those who wish to know the power (δύναμις) of acting.” He asserts that a “more perfect instruction in virtue” cannot be found “than that which the Lord typified (ἐτύπωσεν) in himself.”⁵² Christ’s example is all the more necessary on account of the “unstable character of human behavior.” The Christian life requires “continual ‘formation’ (τυποῦν) of the self through imitation” of the “eternally consistent ‘form’ or ‘pattern’ (τύπος)” provided by the divine Word.⁵³

Christ’s example, however, is mediated through Scripture. The Psalms are a crucial vehicle through which one internalizes the victory of the Word over passions, death and the devil.⁵⁴ Athanasius says that “it was indeed for this reason” that God made Christ’s life “resound in the Psalms before his sojourn in our midst,” so that he could furnish “the model of the earthly and heavenly man in his own person.”⁵⁵ Since Christ’s life echoes throughout the Psalms, the one reciting them both benefits from the power provided by his example, and internalizes that example through daily vocalization.

In addition to indispensable knowledge of Christ, Athanasius maintained that the recitation of Psalms allowed one to discern the movements of one’s own soul. The beginning Christian soon learned how difficult was the preliminary task of gaining an accurate image of the true contours of her or his own soul while it remains shrouded in a fog of falsehood and passion. Athanasius states, “For I believe that the whole of human existence, both the dispositions of the soul and the movements of the thoughts, have been measured out and encompassed in those very words of the Psalter.”⁵⁶ He counsels Marcellinus to employ the words of the Psalter “like a mirror” permitting him to “perceive himself and the motions of his soul” (ψυχῆς

⁵²*Ep. Marcell.* 13 (PG 27:25a–b).

⁵³David Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism*, 167. Athanasius describes this himself, “Imitation (μίμησις) of these natural (κατὰ φύσιν) qualities [in God] is particularly protective in the case of human beings, as has been said; for inasmuch as they [God’s qualities] endure and never change while the conduct of human beings is easily changed, it is possible, by looking to what is unchangeable by nature, to flee evil deeds and to re-form (ἐαυτὸν ἀνατυποῦν) oneself to better things” (*C. Ar.* 3.20 [PG 26:365]; trans. Brakke, *Athanasius*, 167). Burton-Christie observes, “Perhaps the primary means through which the Bible entered and affected the imaginations of those who took up life in the desert was the vivid images of holy exemplars from Scripture—that is, through exemplary interpretation. The biblical saints to whom the monks looked for guidance included figures from both the Old and the New Testament, though of course distinct from them in important ways was the person of Christ” (*Word in the Desert*, 167).

⁵⁴David Brakke comments that although “all human beings receive the incorruption of the Word’s assumed body, they must individually appropriate it through lives of ascetic discipline within the Church” (*Athanasius*, 151–52).

⁵⁵*Ep. Marcell.* 13 (PG 27:25b). Athanasius’s insistence here on the christological focus of the Psalter accords with his more general hermeneutic. See James D. Ernest, “Athanasius of Alexandria: The Scope of Scripture in Polemical and Pastoral Context” *Vigiliae Christianae* 47 (1993) 341–62; idem., *The Bible in Athanasius of Alexandria* (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2004).

⁵⁶*Ep. Marcell.* 30 (PG 27:41c).

κινήματα).⁵⁷ The Psalms, consequently, are a secondary remedial mirror, a corrective lens, that is needed since the human soul, the primary mirror, has become occluded, weakened, and disordered, no longer functioning to reflect the divine image.⁵⁸ Therefore, Athanasius advises Marcellinus to look to the Psalms, as it were, for a linguistic blueprint of the drives that inhabit his soul.

That Athanasius considered the Psalms as such an effective tool for introspection is not surprising in light of the work of Walter Ong, who has written so eloquently on the particular technology of the written word. Ong asserts the following:

By separating the knower from the known, writing makes possible increasingly articulate introspectivity, opening the psyche as never before not only to the external objective world quite distinct from itself but also to the interior self against whom the objective world is set. Writing makes possible the great introspective religious traditions.⁵⁹

Therefore, the fixed otherness of the Psalms exposes the fluidity of the human soul, and allows the Christian to perceive the rhythms of his or her own life.

In the same way that representatives of the Hellenistic philosophical schools drew attention to the therapeutic potential of the speech of the philosopher,⁶⁰ Athanasius points to the words of the Psalter as not only providing knowledge of every stirring of the human soul, but furnishing as well “the therapy (θεραπεία) and correction (διόρθωσις) suited for each motion (κινήματα).”⁶¹ This therapy consists in subject-

⁵⁷*Ep. Marcell.* 12 (PG 27:24c). I have altered Gregg’s translation wherever he has translated κινήματα as “emotions.” Athanasius’s use of this term has a broader semantic range than “emotion” since it includes among other things, the reasoning faculty (cf. *Ep. Marcell.* 27 [PG 27:40a]). John Cassian also likens the Psalms to a mirror. He says that “all these feelings we find expressed in the Psalms” allow us to understand “whatever happens as in a very clear mirror” (*speculo purissimo*) (*Collationes Patrum* 24.10.11 [ed. Michael Petschenig; CSEL 13:305; Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2004]). The comparison between the soul and Homer’s *Odyssey* was also known in antiquity, see Aristotle’s reference to Alcidas’s description of the *Odyssey* as “a beautiful mirror (κάτοπτρον) of human life” (*Rhetorica* 1406b [trans. J. H. Reese; LCL 193:366]).

⁵⁸Rather than being a unique quality of the Psalter, Athanasius appears to have seen the whole of Scripture as effective in acquiring true knowledge of the self. Elsewhere he describes how Antony used to tell himself that the ascetic ought to employ the Scriptural example of Elijah as a “mirror” to “acquire knowledge of his own life” (*Vit. Ant.* 7.13 [SC 400:154–156]). Hence, this quality of Scripture emerges most directly in the Psalter, but is not limited to it.

⁵⁹Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (New Accents; London: Methuen, 1982) 105. Elsewhere he contrasts the written word with the oral: “Oral communication unites people in groups. Writing and reading are solitary activities that throw the psyche back on itself” (69; see also 54–55).

⁶⁰See, for instance, Plutarch’s instruction that one should listen for “the purpose of amending his life by means of what is there said” (τῷ λόγῳ τὸν βίον ἐπανορθωσόμενος) (*Moralia* 1.42A [trans. F. C. Babbitt; LCL 197:226]).

⁶¹*Ep. Marcell.* 13 (PG 27:25b). See also similar expressions in *Ep. Marcell.* 12 (PG 27:24d), and 15 (PG 27:28c). Elsewhere Athanasius says, “See: these are all the medicines of God’s house, existing for the soul’s healing. Often you hear the holy words and psalms: through them you will

ing uncontrolled passions to the form imposed upon them by Scripture. In this way, the irrational motions of the soul become ordered by scriptural reason, which is none other than the presence of the eternal Word in the words of Scripture.⁶² A brief anecdote from the *Apophthegmata Patrum* illumines how Athanasius envisions the stabilizing effects of the Psalter. We are told, "It was said of the same Abba John that when he returned from the harvest or when he had been with some of the old men, he gave himself to prayer, meditation and psalmody until his thoughts were re-established in their previous order" (τάξις).⁶³

Athanasius does not link the healing capacity of self-knowledge to discerning how one's emotional life connects with past experiences or one's formative history.⁶⁴ Instead, he understands it to have more to do with the knowledge of one's place in the universe and the adjustment of one's emotions to suit that context. Athanasius focuses on how the recitation of certain psalms influences the way individuals perceive the particular situations in which they find themselves. In much of his letter, Athanasius commends specific psalms as means to realize the human ideal as determined by his theological outlook in various situations. For example, he says that the one who is afraid should recite Psalm 118:6 (LXX 117:6): "the Lord is my helper, I will not fear what a human being can do to me."⁶⁵ Evidently Athanasius understands fear to be the result of a faulty belief, such as the following proposition: "Since I am vulnerable to being harmed by human beings, I will fear any that desire me harm." Although this proposition may appear reasonable, Athanasius would not consider it so, especially when the fear inhibits virtuous action. Through the exercise of saying the Psalm, the one who fears would seek to replace the proposition driving the fear with the verse from the Psalter which would then become the dominant conviction of the moment.⁶⁶

Although each passion presents the illusion of being unique to a particular situation, the one who recites psalms discovers that no such affliction is his or hers alone. Through speech, passion is brought into the open and made a part of a more universal human struggle. Athanasius, for example, suggests that when one has been "taken captive" by "foreign thoughts" (ἀλλοτριῶν λογισμῶν), repents, but even after repenting must continue to live in the situation in which one was overcome,

make your vows spiritually to the one who called you to eternal life" (Fragment from L. Th. Lefort, *Lettres festales et pastorales en copte* [Louvain, 1965] 124; trans. Brakke, *Athanasius*, 316).

⁶²"The Lord himself is in the phrases (τὰ ῥήματα) of the Scriptures" (τῶν γραφῶν) (*Ep. Marcell.* 33 [PG 27:45a]).

⁶³John Colobos 35 (PG 65:216c; trans. Ward, *Sayings*, 92). Note also Athanasius's remark that "from the movements" of Antony's body "it was possible to sense and perceive the stable condition of the soul" (*Vit. Ant.* 67.6 [SC 400:312] trans. Gregg, 81).

⁶⁴A view famously explicated by Sigmund Freud, *Five Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (trans. and ed. James Strachey; New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1977).

⁶⁵*Ep. Marcell.* 28 (PG 27:40d).

⁶⁶A strategy characteristic of the Hellenistic schools. See, for example, Marcus Aurelius, *De rebus suis* 4. 7 (LCL 58:72), and Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire*, 37–40, 104–36, 366–72.

one should say Psalm 137 (LXX 136).⁶⁷ This Psalm begins with Israel lamenting by the waters of Babylon that it had been taken captive and carried away, and proceeds with a spirited exhortation not to forget Jerusalem. Athanasius then suggests that since such trials test the soul, one can give thanks for them with Psalm 139 (LXX 138). This would entail declaring God's thorough knowledge of one's soul and exclaiming how it is not possible to flee from God's presence whether one seeks to hide in the heavens, in Hades, in darkness or night. Thus, the saying of the psalm initially provides access to the feeling that might otherwise lie fallow or erupt in an untargated manner. The emotion, once expressed through the psalm, however, is immediately reframed and integrated into the larger scriptural narrative. It becomes, as it were, another plant growing in the biblical garden and is thereby perceived differently by the one saying the psalm. The emotion of any given moment, in this way, is situated within the broad horizon of creation and redemption. The chaos of passion finds its form in the Logos in the same way that the primeval universe once did. The Psalm functions here and elsewhere as a means of remembering and participating in God's intended order for creation, where the Logos pervades and gives life to the whole universe—or in the figurative language of the Psalter, of not forgetting Jerusalem.

■ The Exercises of Speech, Actions, and Song

Cleaning the mirror of the soul and regaining its functionality requires the development of new habits of thought and of relating to the world. These habits are developed through exercises (ἄσκησις) that attempt to internalize the knowledge of Christ and self, and to recover for the soul its proper order and agency. This is why Athanasius gives specific directions on *how* Psalms should be sung or said in order to be most effective. Thus, he says, that in addition to teaching that passion is to be disregarded, the Psalms teach more importantly, “also *how* one must heal (θεραπεύω) passion through speaking (λέγω) and acting (ποιῶ).”⁶⁸

Utilization of the Psalter first of all involves speaking its language. Athanasius says that readers of the other books of Scripture “consider themselves to be other (ἄλλοι) than those about whom the passage speaks.” The reader can only marvel (θαυμάζω) and aspire to imitate from afar such biblical figures as the Patriarchs, Moses and Elijah.⁶⁹ Each reader of the Psalms, however, “utters them as his own words (ὡς ἴδια ῥήματα), and each sings them as if they were written concerning him,” and “accepts them and recites them not as if another (ὡς ἑτέρου) were speaking, nor as if speaking about someone else,” but is “affected by the words of the songs.”⁷⁰ Thus, the saying of the Psalms is something like learning a second

⁶⁷*Ep. Marcell.* 25 (PG 27:37a).

⁶⁸Emphasis mine; *Ep. Marcell.* 10 (PG 27:20d).

⁶⁹*Ep. Marcell.* 11 (PG 27:21c).

⁷⁰*Ibid.* (PG 27:24a–b). John Cassian offers a similar description of those who sing Psalms:

language. As one becomes a fluent speaker of the language of the Psalms, one is able to linguistically transcribe the *world* into Biblical words.

The Biblical words have such influence on the life of the Christian because the Psalms are a kind of technology. As Walter Ong reminds us, “technologies are not mere exterior aids but also interior transformations of consciousness, and never more than when they affect the word.”⁷¹ Furthermore, he observes “that intelligence is relentlessly reflexive, so that even the external tools that it uses to implement its workings become ‘internalized,’ that is, part of its own reflexive process.”⁷² Ong notes that internalizing a technology takes “years” of constant “practice,” such as the that of an organist or violinist. Through this practice, the tool can become “a second nature” that “can enrich the human psyche, enlarge the human spirit, intensify its interior life.”⁷³

This interiorization of technology can be seen in Athanasius’s assertion that the Psalter should be re-written by the Christian in her or his own being. Thus Athanasius counsels Marcellinus to “inscribe” (γράφω) the Psalter “on your soul as on a monument” (στήλη). The soul of the Christian then can be described as “inscribed with words” (στηλογραφία).⁷⁴ In this case, the tool has shaped its user, and has become a “second nature.”

Precisely because he sees the very language of the Psalms as such a formative influence in the Christian life, Athanasius proscribes any alteration in the words themselves. He admonishes Marcellinus not to “let anyone amplify these words

“Vivified by this nourishment continually, he will take in to himself all the affections of the Psalms and will begin to sing them in such a way that he will utter them with the deepest compunction of heart not as if they were the compositions of the Psalmist, but rather as if they were his own utterances and his very own prayer; and will certainly take them as directed at himself, and will recognize that their words . . . are fulfilled and accomplished daily in his own case” (*Collat.* 10.11 [CSEL 13:304]).

⁷¹Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 82.

⁷²*Ibid.*, 81.

⁷³*Ibid.*, 83. See also where Ong describes how “The deadness of the text, its removal from the living human lifeworld, its rigid visual fixity,” are the features that assure “its endurance and its potential for being resurrected into limitless living contexts by a potentially infinite number of living readers” (81).

⁷⁴*Ep. Marcell.* 20 (PG 27:33a). Describing Antony’s “reading” of Scripture “that is enacted in life,” Geoffrey Harpham refers to “the readers’ recreation or rewriting of the text not on paper but in his own being. . . . The reception of the Biblical text becomes a form of asceticism, of self-overcoming in which the reader or hearer aspires to an identification with the text that is simultaneously original and derivative” (*The Ascetic Imperative in Culture and Criticism* [Chicago: University of Chicago, 1987] 42). Athanasius is preceded by Origen who wrote that the treasure of divine wisdom “is written more clearly and perfectly in our hearts.” (*De princ.* 4.1.7 [SC 268:290]), as well as by Philo of Alexandria who uses a similar expression regarding the realities referred to in scripture being “graven as though on stone (ἐσθηλιτευμένα) on the hearts of the wise” (*De confusione linguarum* 4.74 [trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whittaker; LCL 261:50]). Athanasius appears to employ this principle, when he states that Antony “paid such close attention to what was read that nothing from Scripture did he fail to take in—rather he grasped everything, and in him the memory took the place of books” (*Vit. Ant.* 3.7 [SC 400:138] trans. Gregg, 32). Douglas Burton-Christie

of the Psalter with the persuasive phrases of the profane,” nor let anyone “attempt to recast or completely change the words.” Instead one must “recite and chant, without artifice (ἀτεχνῶς), the things written.”⁷⁵ In this way, Athanasius insists that the Psalms, even when they are memorized and transmitted orally, retain a textual fixity. The Psalms, therefore, are neither merely the avenue the Christian uses to express prior religious feelings, nor are they a pliable neutral medium that conforms itself to the reader. Appropriating the very words of the Psalter as one’s own is an ascetic act where one’s accustomed form of expression is temporarily suspended in order to adopt as normative the logic and values inherent in the language of Scripture.⁷⁶

Given his understanding of sin as weakening human agency, and eroding the proper power given to creatures by the Logos, Athanasius suggests that the Psalter is an effective tool in the Christian life not only because its words are truer than other ones, but “more powerful” (ἰσχυρότερα) as well.⁷⁷ He appeals to a tradition asserting that “long ago in Israel they drove demons away and turned aside the treacheries directed against them by merely (μόνος) reading the Scriptures.”⁷⁸ Athanasius, therefore, likens the recitation of Scripture to the ark which contained the tablets of the law that went before the Israelites into battle and “provided sufficient help to them in the face of every army.”⁷⁹ In the same way as the ark manifested the Lord’s presence, so “the Lord himself is in the phrases (τὰ ῥήματα) of the Scriptures” (τῶν γραφῶν).⁸⁰ The one who recites these same words can be “confident” (θάρρος) like Antony whose psalmody weakened the demons.⁸¹

In addition to supplying models for moral imitation, Scriptural language and its accompanying power, the Psalms furnish melodies for singing. Athanasius is quick to declare that the “sweetness of sound” in the Psalms should lead no one to believe that “the psalms are rendered musically for the sake of the ear’s delight.”⁸²

observes that several of the stories in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* speak of “the need to attain a saying from Scripture, an indication that the practice of Scripture should lead one to become or appropriate completely its message. This appropriation was seen as a difficult but necessary part of the process of coming truly to understand and realize the meaning of the Scripture. . . . Attaining a saying from Scripture, realizing its truth within oneself, implied a deep moral and spiritual transformation” (*Word in the Desert*, 153).

⁷⁵*Ep. Marcell.* 31 (PG 27:41d).

⁷⁶See Harpham’s discussion of the ascetic quality of reading, since “the very condition of intelligibility” in reading is the submission of the reader to the “extrasubjective” text (*Ascetic Imperative*, 134).

⁷⁷*Ep. Marcell.* 31 (PG 27:44a).

⁷⁸*Ibid.* 33 (PG 27:44d–45a).

⁷⁹*Ibid.* 32 (PG 27:44d).

⁸⁰*Ibid.* 33 (PG 27:45a).

⁸¹*Ibid.* 32 (PG 27:44b). For Antony, see n. 4. Conversely, those who change the words do not benefit from the divine presence in them, and “expose themselves to being mocked by demons” (*Ep. Marcell.* 33 [PG 27:45a]).

⁸²*Ep. Marcell.* 27 (PG 27:37d).

The musical aspect of the Psalms, instead, according to Athanasius, is yet another means of attending to the soul. The task of singing them according to their melodies is commended to Marcellinus as an important exercise as well. Athanasius maintains that the one singing the Psalms should sing “with the mind” as well as “with the tongue.”⁸³ The melody of the phrases “is a symbol of the mind’s well-ordered and undisturbed condition.” He asserts that the musical instruments mentioned in the Psalms are “a figure and sign of the parts of the body coming into natural concord like harp strings, and of the thoughts of the souls becoming like cymbals.”⁸⁴

The outer musical harmony not only expresses the inner concord of the soul, but also contributes to it. Athanasius says that the one “beautifully singing praises brings rhythm” to the “soul and leads it . . . from disproportion to proportion.” The soul gains “its composure by singing the phrases” of the Psalter, “rejoices” as it “becomes forgetful of the passions,” and conceives the “most excellent thoughts” while it “sees in accordance with the mind of Christ.”⁸⁵ The mathematical precision of the melody acts on the self to order it according to God’s intention. Thus, the harmony of the sung Psalms signifies a well ordered human being, and the harmonious person who practices psalmody manifests the message of the Psalter.

■ Conclusion

As he sought to unify the Egyptian church through an ascetic program shared by Christians in the desert and the city, Athanasius promoted the use of the Psalter in the Christian life. He did so employing language and concepts that had been used previously by Hellenistic philosophers to describe their methods of shaping the soul and disciplining its passions. The daily recitation of Psalms, for Athanasius, is an

⁸³Ibid. 29 (PG 27:41a).

⁸⁴*Ep. Marcell.* 29 (PG 27:41b).

⁸⁵Ibid. 29 (PG 27:41b); See Basil’s similar comments on the beneficial qualities of the Psalter’s melodies (PG 29:212b–213c). In a speech addressing the citizens of Alexandria, three centuries prior to Athanasius, Dio Chrysostom stated, “music is believed to have been invented by human beings for the healing (θεραπεΐας) of their passions, and especially for transforming souls which are in harsh and savage state. That is why even some philosophers attune themselves to the lyre at dawn, thereby striving to quell the confusion caused by their dreams. And it is with song that we sacrifice to the gods, for the purpose of insuring order and stability in ourselves” (*Or.* 32.57 [LCL 358:226–28]). The use of music for philosophical ends was often associated with the Pythagoreans. For example in his *de vita Pythagorica*, Iamblichus describes how Pythagoras employed music in spiritual exercises to “correct human characters and ways of life by means of music”: “The entire Pythagorean school created what is called ‘musical arrangement’ and ‘musical combination’ and (musical) treatment, skillfully reversing dispositions of the soul to opposite emotions with certain suitable tunes. . . . There are cases in which they healed emotions (πάθη) and certain sicknesses, as they say, truly by means of singing as an incantation” (ἐπαύδοντες) (25.114, also discussed in 25.110–13, and 32.224; trans. John Dillon and Jackson Hershbell, *On the Pythagorean Way of Life: Texts, Translation, and Notes* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991]). See also Maximus of Tyre, *Dissertationes* 37.5, and the useful collection by Andrew Barker, ed., *Greek Musical Writings* (2 vols; Cambridge Readings in the Literature of Music; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

essential part of Christian spiritual practice because it is particularly useful in the care of self. It provides resources that are necessary to reform the self: knowledge of Christ and the soul, powerful models for imitation, a language that reveals the true state of the world, and daily exercises that bring the discordant motions of the soul into proper harmony.

Knowing well the resistance that human life gives to its own perfection, Athanasius understood the Psalter to be all the more necessary in appropriating the Christian faith. Not unlike contemporary Hellenistic philosophers, Athanasius believed that personal practice convinced the mind as much as any proof.⁸⁶ He, therefore, advised Marcellinus to adopt a regime of physical actions that occupy the mind and train the body. Athanasius was acutely aware of the manner in which the malleability of the human person is a source of greatness and wretchedness. For the same instability of form that brings with it the possibility of falling into nothingness simultaneously presents the capacity for training and amendment of life. The daily chanting of Psalms then is a therapy that gradually heals the human person. The language of the Psalter progressively “counters the instability of self-hood”⁸⁷ with the stability of a written text that becomes a second nature when it is written in the soul.

⁸⁶See Seneca, *De ira* 2.12.3–6 (trans. John W. Basore; LCL 214:192–94).

⁸⁷Harpham, *Ascetic Imperative*, 41.

Notes and Observations

An Ordinal of Christ in Medieval Catalan*

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In the later Middle Ages, scholars frequently translated ancient and medieval Latin texts into various vernacular languages, and the text studied here provides an example of this. Widely copied and modified throughout the Middle Ages, the little text, called an Ordinal of Christ, appears in over eighty versions and has a threefold significance. First, it turns up as the first reported example of an Ordinal of Christ in Catalan. Second, the version of the text does not belong to a high or late medieval tradition, such as one might expect in a late medieval manuscript, but goes back at least to the ninth and tenth centuries in the early Middle Ages. Third, the text parallels a version found largely in southern Italy and thus illustrates the contacts and connections between Catalonia and southern Italy throughout the Middle Ages.

Ordinals of Christ¹ refer to short texts that list each grade in the ecclesiastical hierarchy with some word(s) or deed(s) in Christ's life to justify or sanction that grade. Throughout the Middle Ages from at least the fifth to the sixteenth century, people used them in sermons, biblical commentaries, theological treatises, sentence collections, canon law collections, liturgical commentaries, ordination allocutions,

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¹On the origin of the term Ordinal of Christ, see my monograph *The Ordinals of Christ from Their Origins to the Twelfth Century* (Beiträge zur Geschichte und Quellenkunde des Mittelalters 7; New York: W. de Gruyter, 1978) 6; and "Christ as Cleric: The Ordinals of Christ," in *Clerics in*

erotomatic literature, *glossaria*, and in manuscripts as space fillers and *probationes pennae*, to mention but a few. Moreover, from Ireland in the west to Austria in the east and from Scandinavia in the north to Italy and Spain in the south, most regions in western Europe compiled and copied their Ordinals of Christ. The Ordinals of Christ had no established text, and their authors remained often anonymous. Hence the compilers of these texts felt relatively free to rearrange, to add, and to subtract dominical sanctions; this practice thereby reflected developments over the centuries in the theology of sacred orders. Indeed, the Ordinals of Christ represent perhaps the best “barometer” to assess these theological changes. The numbers and the arrangement of the grades in the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the luxuriance of the sanctions from Christ’s life assigned to each grade, the so-called dominical sanctions, astonish us. Even more examples of the Ordinals, often hidden away in unexpected places, turn up almost yearly.²

Just as striking as the theological diversity of the Ordinals of Christ, the languages in which they appear produce similar lexical diversity. In the West most Ordinals of Christ use Latin, but before and while the western churches had cast them in Latin, they used other languages for them as well. Indeed, the first formal Ordinal of Christ appeared in Greek in the fifth-century *Apopthegmata* or *Verba seniorum*.³ Thereafter they appear in various sources of the Eastern churches: the *Paradise* of Enaniso,⁴ an anonymous Syriac *Expositio officiorum ecclesiae*,⁵ the works of the Syrian Dionysius bar Salibi and Theodore bar Wahbun,⁶ and the fifteenth-century Symeon of Thessalonika.⁷ Further work by scholars specializing in eastern languages will undoubtedly turn up more. Scholars looking to the West have found Ordinals of Christ in versified and prose Irish forms⁸ and particularly in Old English.⁹

Among the Ordinals of Christ of the early Middle Ages, one finds two common arrangements of the ecclesiastical grades and the dominical sanctions attached to

the *Early Middle Ages: Hierarchy and Image* (Variorum Collected Studies Series 669; Brookfield, Vt.: Ashgate, 1999) ch. 2. The theme of the Ordinals of Christ was originally discussed in my doctoral dissertation at Harvard: “Sacred Orders in the Early Middle Ages: Shifts in the Theology of the Lower and Higher Ecclesiastical Orders from Late Patristic Antiquity through the Early Middle Ages as Reflected in the Ordinals of Christ and Related Literature” (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), and was summarized in “Sacred Orders in the Early Middle Ages,” *Harvard Theological Review* 62 (1969) 436.

²For example, only in 2004 while working on a *Glossarium* in a Beneventan-script codex at Montecassino, Archivio della Badia 205 (s. XI^m), 209, an unusual Ordinal was discovered tucked away in the middle of the *Glossarium*; on which see below, n. 27.

³*Ordinals*, 18–19.

⁴*Ibid.*, 21.

⁵*Ibid.*, 22–23.

⁶*Ibid.*, 24–24.

⁷*Ibid.*, 26.

⁸*Ibid.*, 64–65.

⁹*Ibid.*, 86–88.

each. The first one listed the grades in the chronological sequence in which Christ fulfilled them by some word(s) or deed(s) in his life. This form, known as a Chronological Version, has a number of variants. In such a Chronological Version, the lowest grade of doorkeeper would go immediately before the highest grade of bishop because Christ as doorkeeper harrowed hell after or during his passion and before blessing the disciples as bishop at his ascension. An eighth-century manuscript, Vatican, BAV Pal. Lat. 277, provides a good example of this type of Ordinal:

Tell me, how and when did Christ fulfill the seven grades? Response. As the first grade he was a lector when he opened the book of the prophet Isaiah and said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me." As the second grade he was an exorcist when he cast out seven demons from Mary Magdalene. As the third grade he was a subdeacon when he made wine from water at Cana in Galilee. As the fourth grade he was a deacon when he washed the feet of his disciples. As the fifth grade he was a presbyter when he blessed bread, broke it, and gave it to his disciples. These five grades Christ fulfilled before his passion. As the sixth grade he was a doorkeeper when he said, "Lift up your heads O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors." As the seventh grade he was a bishop when he lifted his hand over the heads of his disciples and blessed them.¹⁰

In the other form, the authors arranged the grades in the order in which clerics generally followed them in their way through the clerical *cursus honorum*. Known as a Hierarchical Version, this form likewise has a number of variants. In these one would find the lowly doorkeeper generally listed first and the exalted bishop last. A ninth-century canon law manuscript of the *Collectio canonum hibernensis* (Orléans, Bibliothèque de la Ville 221), called an Hiberno-Hispanic Hierarchical Ordinal, provides a good example of this type (it has the designation "Hispanic" because, as in the works on the clerical orders of Isidore of Seville used in the *Collectio canonum hibernensis*, the exorcist has a hierarchically lower place than the lector):

Concerning the grades that Christ fulfilled. He was a doorkeeper because he opened the gates of Hell. He was an exorcist because he cast out seven demons from Mary Magdalene. He was a lector when he opened the book of Isaiah. He was a subdeacon because he made wine from water in Cana of Galilee. He was deacon when he washed the feet of his disciples. He was

¹⁰Dic mihi. Quomodo vel quando implevit Christus septem grados: Respondit. Primus gradus lector quando aperuit librum Esaiæ prophete et dixit, Spiritus domini super me. Secundus gradus exorcista quando eicit vii. demonia de Maria Magdalene. Tertius gradus subdiaconus quando fecit vinum de aqua in Chanam Galileæ. Quartus gradus diaconus lavavit pedes discipulorum suorum. Quintus gradus presbyter quando benedixit panem et fregit, dedit discipulis suis. Istos quintus grados ante passionem implevit Christus. Sextus gradus ostiarius quando dixit, Tollite portas, principes vestri, et elevamini, portae aeternales. Septimus gradus episcopus quando levavit manum suam super capita discipulorum suorum et benedixit eos. This example is given in "Christ as Cleric," 9 [Hibernian Chronological Ordinal from Vatican, BAV Pal. Lat. 277, fol. 87r-v].

a priest because he took bread and broke it and blessed it. He was a bishop when he raised his hands to heaven and blessed the apostles.¹¹

By the late eleventh and early twelfth century, this hierarchical form became dominant, and the authors added myriad dominical sanctions. Among these hierarchical Ordinals of Christ of the later Middle Ages, the ones related to the Ordinals of Christ in *Sermo II* of Ivo of Chartres,¹² the *De sacramentis* of Hugh of St. Victor,¹³ and the *Sententiae* of Peter Lombard¹⁴ attained greatest importance. Although clerics copied some of the most ancient forms of the Ordinals in manuscripts of the twelfth century and beyond, these forms occur rarely.¹⁵

It comes as a surprise, therefore, to discover one of the most ancient forms of the Ordinals in a late fourteenth- and late fifteenth-century composite manuscript. Even more surprising—although heretofore predicted¹⁶—we find it in another vernacular language. The Catalan language developed in the ninth century out of vulgar Latin, and people still use it today in Catalonia, the Balearic Islands, parts of Valencia in Spain, Andorra, the Roussillon area in southern France, and even the Italian city of Alghero. The manuscript itself, written somewhere in the diocese of Barcelona, as its style of Catalan evidences, remains now in the Biblioteca de Catalunya of Barcelona and bears the shelfmark 309.¹⁷ The section of the manuscript containing

¹¹De gradibus in quibus Christus adfuit. Hostiarius fuit quoniam aperuit hostia inferni. Exorcista quoniam iecit vii. demonia de Maria Magdalena. Lector quando aperuit librum Essaiæ. Subdiaconus quoniam fecit vinum de aqua in Cana Galilee. Diaconus quando lavit pedes discipulorum suorum. Sacerdos quoniam accepit panem ac fregit et benedixit. Episcopus fuit quando elevavit manus suas ad celum et benedixit apostolos. This example can be found in "Christ as Cleric," 9 [Hiberno-Hispanic Hierarchical Ordinal, from Orléans, Bibliothèque de la Ville 221].

¹²*Ordinals*, 101–2.

¹³*Ibid.*, 143.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 144.

¹⁵See, e.g., the Hibernian Chronological Version with explanatory interlude in Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek 1642 (s. XII) (text and commentary in H. Weisweiler, *Das Schrifttum der Schule Anselms von Laon und Wilhelms von Champeaux in deutschen Bibliotheken. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Verbreitung der ältesten scholastischen Schule in deutschen Landen* [Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters 33.1–2; Münster in W.: Aschendorff, 1936] 235–38); Douai, Bibliothèque Municipale 357 (s. XIII), fol. 87r; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale Lat. 7418 (s. XIV); and the same Version (but lacking explanatory interlude) in Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Lat. 806 (s. XII), fol. 54r.

¹⁶In "Christ as Cleric," 1, the comment was made that "in the west they [Ordinals of Christ] were written in Old English, Irish and *probably* in other vernacular languages."

¹⁷On this manuscript see *Guía de la Biblioteca Central de la Diputación Provincial de Barcelona* (Barcelona, 1959) 64; *Cincuenta años de la antigua Biblioteca de Catalunya* (Barcelona, 1968) 133–34; Karl-Werner Gumpel, "Zwei unbeachtete Fragmente der altkatalanischen Art del cant pla," in *De musica hispana et aliis. Miscelánea en honor al Prof. Dr. José López-Caló, S.J. en su 65º cumpleaños* (Colección Aula Abierta. Música 1; Santiago de Compostela: Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 1990) 120–22, 130–43. Eulàlia Duran with M. del Mar Battle, Eulàlia Miralles, Maria Toldrà, and Joan Tres, *Repertori de manuscrits Catalans, 1474-1620* (Memories de la Secció Històrico Arqueològica 50; Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1998) 182–83. The Catalan language is generally divided into Western and Eastern Catalan, the former including North-Western Catalan (Ribagorça, Pallarès, Tortosí, Lleidatà) and Valencian (northern Valencian,

Catalan language texts extends primarily but not exclusively from folios 124 to 144. The major part of this section contains the *Speculum ecclesiae* of Hugh of St. Cher (†1263) with an allegorical explanation of the Mass liturgy.¹⁸ Following this, an explanation of the canonical hours, a number of questions on liturgical issues, and a final section of diverse texts on the paschal candle and its "baptism" during the Easter vigil appear. An Ordinal of Christ in Catalan, printed here as one finds it in the manuscript, closes the section:

One ought to know that our Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled the seven ecclesiastical orders. He was a lector when he opened the book of the prophet Isaiah and said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me." He was an exorcist when he cast out seven demons from the body of St. Mary Magdalene. He was a subdeacon when he washed the feet of the disciples. He was a priest when at the last supper he blessed bread and wine and changed them into his body and blood. These five grades Jesus Christ fulfilled before his passion. He was a doorkeeper when he took the holy fathers from Hell and said "Lift up your gates, etc." He was a bishop when he raised his hands over the heads of his disciples and blessed them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit, whosoever sins ye shall loose shall be pardoned, and whosoever sins ye shall bind shall be bound." Blessed be the name of God, his holy mother, and all his saints male and female. Amen etc. [sic].¹⁹

That the title states seven grades but lists only six in the text itself strikes one first about this Ordinal of Christ. Anomalies like this between title and text occur fairly commonly in the Ordinals of Christ and in other texts on sacred orders.²⁰ At times, this happens because the scribe has copied the title correctly but has mis-transcribed the text and omitted grades in the original from which he worked. At

Apitxat [central Valencian], southern Valencian, and Majorcan from Tàrbena and la Vall de Gallinera Valencian municipalities) and the latter including northern Calatan or Rossellonès, central Catalan (Saltat from the Costa Brava, Barcelonès, Tarragonès and Xipella) Balearic (Mallorquì, Monorquì, Eivissenc from Ibiza or Eivissa) and Alguerès (from the Italian city of Alghero or Alguer).

¹⁸For the text of this work, see *Hugonis a St. Charo Tractatus super missam seu Speculum ecclesiae* (ed. Gisbert Sölch; *Opuscula et textus historiam ecclesiae eiusque vitam atque doctrinam illustrantia*, Series Liturgica 9: Münster in W.: Aschendorff 1940). For the texts in the codex in Latin and Catalan, see the literature cited in the preceding note.

¹⁹[D] euets saber que les .vij. ordes ecclesiastichs volch auer nostro seyor Jhesucrist. Con el fo lector, con obre lo libre de Isayes profeta e dix: Speritus dominus [sic] super me, eo quod vnixerit me. Encara fo exorcita [sic], con gita .vii. demonis del cors de senta Maria Magdalena. Encara fo sotsdiaca, con leua [sic] los peus als dexeables. Encara fo preuera, con lo digous de la cena beney lo pa e lo vi, e.l feu tornar en cors e en sanch seu. .v. gracies, conpli Jhesucrist ans de la sua passio. Fo encara hostiari, con trasch los sans pares del infern[fol. 145^r=lvij^r] e dix: Atollite portas etc. Fo encara bisbe, con leua les mans sobre los caps dels seus dexeables, els benay e los dix: Prenets l'esperit sant. E aquels als qualls lexarets los pecats, sien perdonats: e aquels a qui vos los retraurets, sie-los retrauguts. Beneyt sie lo nom de deu, e de la sua beneyta mare, e de tots los seus sans e santes. Amen, etc [sic]. [Barcelona, Biblioteca de Catalunya 309, fol. 144^v=lvi^r].

²⁰See my "'At Sixes and Sevens'—and Eights and Nines: The Sacred Mathematics of Sacred Orders in the Early Middle Ages," *Speculum* 54 (1979) esp. 680–81; reprinted in my *Clerics in the Early Middle Ages*, 3.

other times the compiler or scribe purposely wrote the number 'vii,' to signify a traditional number of grades or the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, but continued to list more or fewer than seven grades. Our text probably evinces the former case, since almost all Ordinals of Christ list the deacon, missing here, with a dominical sanction. Moreover, while the dominical sanction applies the *pedilavium*, or the ritual of footwashing, to the subdeacon, the ancient Ordinals of Christ, that the scribe appears to follow here, assigns the *pedilavium* to the deacon. Only in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and beyond did they attach the *pedilavium* to the subdeacon.²¹ Further, the statement following the presbyteral grade, that Christ fulfilled five orders before his passion, indicates that a scribal mistake has taken place, because the text gives only four.

That the text lists the grades in the chronological order in which Christ fulfilled them constitutes another notable aspect of our Ordinal of Christ in Catalan. The lowest doorkeeper precedes the highest bishop. One can explain this order, as in many early medieval Ordinals of Christ, by an explanatory interlude stating that Christ fulfilled the five orders listed earlier, before he underwent the passion. This expegetical interlude in chronologically arranged Ordinals of Christ goes back at least to the eighth century.²²

Other notable aspects appear in the dominical sanctions used for several grades. For the grade of doorkeeper, the text gives two dominical sanctions, the harrowing of hell and Psalm 23 (24). In early Ordinals of Christ, especially those of Hibernian origin, the scribes or compilers used the harrowing of hell in hierarchically arranged texts and Psalm 23 (24) in the chronologically arranged texts.²³ Here we see a conflation of the dominical sanctions of those two different types. We find this particularly interesting, because this conflation, the so-called Italo-Hibernian Chronological Ordinal, turns up commonly in the Hibernian Chronological Ordinals from southern Italy. An example of this appears in a famous canon law manuscript written in both Romanesca and Beneventan script of the eleventh century (Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana Tomus XVIII):

Concerning the seven grades that Christ fulfilled and how Christ fulfilled these seven grades. As the first grade he was a lector when he opened the book of the prophet Isaiah and said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me and sent me to bring good news to the poor." As the second grade, moreover, he was an exorcist when he cast out seven demons from Mary Magdalene ([*gloss*] Magdalum is a village). As the third grade he was a subdeacon when in Cana of Galilee he made wine from water. As the fourth grade he was a deacon when he washed the feet of his disciples. As the fifth grade he was a presbyter when he took bread, broke, and blessed it and simi-

²¹*Ordinals*, 101, 176–90.

²²*Ordinals*, 58–59.

²³See the texts above: "Christ as Cleric," 9 [Hibernian Chronological Ordinal from Vatican, BAV Pal. Lat. 277, fol. 87r-v]; *ibid.* [Hiberno-Hispanic Hierarchical Ordinal, from Orléans, Bibliothèque de la Ville 221].

larly blessed the chalice. These five grades he fulfilled before his passion. As the sixth grade he was a doorkeeper when in his passion he opened the gates of Hell. Others say when it was said, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in." As seventh grade he was a bishop when ascending to heaven he raised his hand over the heads of the disciples and blessed them.²⁴

Moreover, we have evidence that texts belonging to the south Italian *Collection in Five Books* with this Italo-Hibernian Chronological Ordinal had appeared in Catalonia from at least the late eleventh century.²⁵

Two further dominical sanctions may reflect a knowledge of the Ordinals of Christ from southern Italy. The first one, that concerns the presbyter, occurs where Christ blessed both the bread and wine.²⁶ The other southern Italian tradition may appear in the episcopal verse, in which Christ blesses the disciples and gives them power to forgive sins, and may reflect a citation of John 20:22–23 found in an Ordinal of Christ in a Montecassino manuscript of the second half of the eleventh century (Archivio della Badia 217):

Concerning the eight grades that the Lord fulfilled. God fulfilled eight grades: doorkeeper, lector, acolyte, exorcist, subdeacon, deacon, presbyter,

²⁴De septem gradibus quos Christus adimplevit. Quomodo implevit Christus septem gradus. Primum gradum lector quando aperuit librum Esaie prophete et dixit, Spiritus domini super me eo quod unxit me, evangelizare pauperibus misit me. Secundum gradum autem exorcista quando eiecit septem demonia de Maria Magdalena, Magdalum enim villa est. Tertium enim gradum subdiaconus quando in Cana Galilee fecit de aqua vinum. Quartum gradum diaconus quando lavit pedes discipulorum suorum. Quintum gradum presbiter quando accepit panem, benedixit ac fregit, similiter et calicem benedixit. Istos quinque gradus ante passionem implevit. Sextum gradum hostiarius quando in passione aperuit portas inferni. Alii dicunt quando dictum est, Tollite portas, principes vestri, et elevamini, porte eternales et introivit rex glorie. Septimum gradum episcopus quando ascendens in celum levavit manum suam super caput discipulorum suorum et benedixit eos. This example is found in *Ordinals*, 93 [Italo-Hibernian Chronological Ordinal in Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana Tomus XVIII, fol. 149v]. This conflation of the two dominical sanctions is also found in a less-likely source, a mid-ninth-century Ordinal from Limoges but written in northern France, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale Lat. 1248, fols. 67v–68r: INT. Fuit Christus hostiarius? Fuit. INT. Ubi? R. Post passionem (sic) suam quando aparuit portas inferni et dixit, Tollite portas principes vestras.

²⁵See my "South Italian Liturgica and Canonistica in Catalonia (New York, Hispanic Society of America MS. HC 380/819)," *Mediaeval Studies* 49 (1987) 487–89 reprinted in my *Law and Liturgy in the Latin Church, 5th–12th Centuries* (Collected Studies Series 457; Brookfield, Vt.; Ashgate, 1994). The Ordinal of Christ in this Hispanic Society manuscript is, however, of the common Hibernian Chronological Version known throughout Europe. In this article, pp. 484–87, it is also emphasized that manuscripts in Beneventan script from southern Italy went to Catalonia in the Middle Ages and were palimpsested and overwritten (e.g., Tortosa, Biblioteca Capitular 122). Further, the version of the Pseudo-Damasus-Pseudo-Hieronymian text on the Mass in the Hispanic Society manuscript is in the same version as that in Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Archivio San Pietro H 58, a codex written in Rome ca. 1000 but based on a Beneventan-script exemplar, on which see my "A South Italian Liturgico-Canonical Mass Commentary," *Mediaeval Studies* 50 (1988), 626–70, reprinted in my *Law and Liturgy in the Latin Church, 5th–12th Centuries* (Collected Studies Series 457; Brookfield, Vt.; Ashgate, 1994).

²⁶See above: *Ordinals*, 93 [Italo-Hibernian Chronological Ordinal in Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana Tomus XVIII, fol. 149v].

and bishop. He was a doorkeeper when it was said, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates." He was a lector when he opened the book of the prophet Isaiah and said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me." He was an exorcist when he exorcized and cast out seven demons from Mary Magdalene. He was an acolyte when he took incense and a candlestick and said, "A portion of my inheritance." He was a subdeacon when he made wine from water at Cana of Galilee. He was a deacon when he took the chalice and said, "This chalice is the blood of the New Covenant." He was a priest when he took bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to his disciples. He was a bishop when he raised his hands over the disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit, the sins of those you shall remit shall be remitted to them."²⁷

Although the major portion of the Barcelona codex in the Catalan language contains a text of the thirteenth century, the *Speculum ecclesiae* of Hugh of St. Cher, our Ordinal of Christ in that same codex reflects the most ancient western tradition, the Hibernian Chronological Version. This version with its explanatory interlude occurs in various manuscripts from Catalonia and southern France, as follows: Paris, BN lat. 614A (s.IX-X, southern France); New York, Columbia University Plimpton 58 (s.IX^{2/3}, southern France with Spanish symptoms); Albi, Bibliothèque Rochgude 43 (s.IX^{4/4}, southern France); Barcelona, Biblioteca Universitaria 228 (s.X, southern France/northern Italy? or Catalonia?); and New York, Hispanic Society of America HC 380/819 (s.XI^{ex.}, Sta. Maria de Estany, Catalonia). One of these texts might have formed the basis of our Catalan text. The fact, however, that some of the grades in our Catalan text have dominical sanctions not found in these manuscripts from Catalonia and southern France but rather in the Italo-Hibernian Chronological Version and the Montecassino Ordinal of Christ suggests that a text of a south Italian Ordinal of Christ circulated in Catalonia in the thirteenth century. Thus, unexpectedly, the late medieval compiler of our Ordinal of Christ in the medieval Catalan language may have used it as a model.

²⁷De viii. grados quos dominus adimplevit. Octo grados adimplevit Deus, ostiarius, lector, acolitus, exorcista, subdiaconus, diaconus, presbyter, episcopus. Ostiarius fuit ubi dixit, Tollite portas principes vestras. Lector fuit ubi aperuit librum Isaie prophetae et dixit, Spiritus domini super me eo quod unxit me. Exorcista fuit ubi exorcizavit et fugavit vii. demonia Maria Magdalene. Acolitus fuit ubi accepit incensum et ceraptata et dixit, Pars hereditatis meae. Subdiaconus fuit quando vinum fecit de aqua in Chana Galileae. Diaconus fuit ubi accepit calicem et dixit, Hic calix sanguis Novi Testamenti. Sacerdos fuit ubi accepit panem et benedixit ac fregit et dedit discipulis suis. Episcopus fuit ubi levavit manus super discipulos suos et dixit, Accipite Spiritum sanctum, quorum remisistis peccata remittuntur eis. This example is found in "Christ as Cleric," 18. [Montecassino Ordinal from Montecassino, Archivio della Badia 217 (s. XI²²) in Beneventan script]. In a hitherto unnoted south Italian Ordinal of Christ there is a similar but truncated version of this ending for the bishop: Accipite spiritum sanctum. In the middle of a *Glossarium* in a Beneventan-script codex Montecassino, Archivio della Badia 205 (s. XI^m) 209, the following unusual Ordinal of Christ appears: Lector fuit Iesus quando legit librum esayae. Ianitor quando aperuit et percussit portas inferni. Exorcista quando increpavit demonia, exorcizo graeco expello vel increpo. Subdiaconus quando aquam convertit in vinum. Diaconus quando lavit pedes discipulorum. Presbyter quando benedixit panem tribuens discipulis. Episcopus quando insufflavit in discipulos dicens Accipite spiritum sanctum. Other more unlikely later medieval sources with this text are the Arsenal Ordinal and *Liber Quare Addenda* Ordinal, on which see "Christ as Cleric," 25–26.

A Review of *Christlicher Glaube im Pluralismus. Studien zu einer Theologie der Kultur* by Christoph Schwöbel

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The key question that Christoph Schwöbel raises in *Christlicher Glaube im Pluralismus* is one that has emerged as an imperative. A Christian theology responsible to the contemporary realities of pluralism must enter its theological analysis of the global situation of Christian faith into wider discussions of culture. Theologians cannot abdicate their role in articulating their distinctive ways of schematizing reality. They cannot shy away from making truth claims amid other competitors, and they cannot give up on the question of unity—whether metaphysical, ethical, or eschatological—while celebrating difference. Christoph Schwöbel, professor of systematic theology at the Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, Germany since 2004, dares to respond to this imperative. In this recent collection of essays, he enters into the pluralist conversation with a commitment to the trinitarian centerpiece of Christianity, which he fleshes out with considerable knowledge of the Western European Christian theological and philosophical tradition.

Pluralism is a complex subject. The global diversity of cultures, the multiple religious trajectories of Christianity in diverse relations with each other, and the interplay between secular and religious tendencies in the modern West (with their implications for the world), are among the many faces of pluralism. Schwöbel sustains a theological gaze on these many faces, offering a collection of studies that are decisively unapologetic in view of the trinitarian “determining horizon of Christian faith”¹ and decidedly realist in view of metaphysical commitment. A book that places the Trinity on the center-stage of discussions of pluralism is to be welcomed on a theological stage that has tended to relegate apologetically its

¹“Die Trinitätslehre als Horizontbestimmung des christlichen Glaubens, 90 (italics in original).”

two central dogmas (Trinity and Christology) to the wings of metaphysical idealist speculation.

The Trinity is Schwöbel's particular Christian doctrinal key for analyzing the plurality of the contemporary world and of Christian churches. He writes that pluralism is "the signature of our life-world"² and that global Christianity is a pluralistically differentiated religion. Pluralism poses the question of mediation between the one and the many. Schwöbel chooses this ancient Greek philosophical conundrum to capture the central intellectual problem of pluralism. He wants to acknowledge both real diversity in the contemporary world without losing sight of attendant metaphysical and hermeneutically relevant questions (for example, the question of truth and the mutual understanding of concepts). Schwöbel formulates the question of unity without succumbing to the monarchianism and totalitarianism characterizing many Western notions of unity. The perfect subject and model for the mediation between one and many is, from the Christian perspective, the Trinity. Schwöbel privileges this doctrine because Christians claim the triune God as the divine reality at the center of Christian life and worship. The Christian understanding of its God is the key to understanding the reality of the world, and in particular of the world's radical plurality.

This decisively confessional approach to Christian theology dovetails with that of major proponents of Reformation thought. But Schwöbel's contribution to theological history is more than recapitulation of the past. If his (and others, for example American neo-liberals') diagnosis of pluralism is correct, that is, that modern society is characterized not by secularization but by religious flowering,³ then religious claims can be made without apology in the public sphere from distinct religious perspectives. Hence the Trinity appears in interreligious, interdisciplinary, and ecumenical dialogue as the Christian analytical key for understanding the one and the many in religion and culture. There need be no liberal shyness regarding the distinctiveness of the Christian voice in order to advance democratic dialogue, but as Schwöbel boldly writes, "the more religious, the more tolerance."⁴ The Trinity makes pluralism possible! On this analytical point Schwöbel veers away from a Barthian path by concentrating less on speculative axiomatic questions of the immanent Trinity and more on the pluralist ways in which the Trinity acts in the world. Christian theology's answer to the question of pluralism is

the mediation of the unity and plurality through the self-manifestation of the immanent Trinity in the economy of salvation: in creation, in the reconciliation available in the context of the incarnation, and in the consummation in which the triune God actualizes the community with creation with which God

²"[Die] Signatur unserer Lebenswelt, 16."

³Preface, xiv.

⁴"Je religiöser, desto toleranter," xiv.

is reconciled, a goal which God intended from the beginning as the determination of humans and the world.⁵

The unity of world history is mediated by diverse divine actions promoting abundant life.

This book has given me the occasion, not only to summarize its content, but to take a closer look at the way in which theological writing can be adequate to its distinctive subject matter. If the contemporary context is indeed ecumenically, culturally, and ideologically pluralist, then the form of Christian theology—its genre, language, and central concepts—must be such to facilitate transdiscursive communication and understanding. If a theologian is to articulate a distinctive schematization of reality and to promote the truth of this understanding, then his claims must be fashioned in such a way that they can be heard by those outside the race, class, and gender contingent to his own cultural location. The power of Christian theology for the twenty-first century stands or falls with the cultivation of a form that both adequately represents its object of study and cultivates a readership with which true dialogue can take place. My subsequent comments use Schwöbel's book as a point of departure for thinking about new responsibilities regarding the form of theological writing that are given in this new situation of pluralism.

The theologian's *métier* is the crafting of the concept. Philosophical concepts, such as truth and reality, and theological concepts, such as love and evil, are generated and developed in history as the basis for transhistorical dialogue. Consensus regarding common concepts is a dialogical *sine qua non*; without something in common to talk about, theological discussion would regress into isolated soliloquies. A theologian who desires to communicate her particular assigning of historical and constructive predicates to concepts must pay special care to the form and language in which this crafting is expressed.

Schwöbel's in-depth work on theological concepts is evident in his references to articles he has written for one of the two definitive Protestant lexica, *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*.⁶ Yet the deployment of concepts for rhetorical emphasis differs from the use of concepts in establishing a common subject matter for dialogical investigation. Concepts facilitate dialogue when an agreement concerning their content is reached, and concepts promote the dialectic of truth-seeking when differences can be brought into dialogical play. In a pluralist context, it can be neither assumed that one's readers have access to a common history of concept formation. Nor can it be taken for granted that readers are familiar with the rationale for why specific concepts are evoked in view of a particular subject

⁵"Diese Vermittlung von Einheit und Vielfalt durch die Selbstmanifestation der immanenten Trinität in der Heilsökonomie realisiert wird: in der Schöpfung, der Versöhnung im Zusammenhang der Menschwerdung Gottes und in der Vollendung, in der der dreieinige Gott die von Anbeginn an intendierte Gemeinschaft mit seiner versöhnten Schöpfung als Ziel der Bestimmung des Menschen und der Welt verwirklicht," x-xi.

⁶RGG, 4th ed.

matter. The reason for the Christian theological fascination with metaphysical and world-historical unity, for example, might be less than transparent to those thinkers who rejoice in difference. Nor can concepts that appear in pedantically predictable syntax provide the legitimate pleasures of reading. The challenge facing the tendency to theological abstraction is precisely the challenge to theology to ground its claims in an empirically accessible account of reality. Questions such as “why” and “how” are hermeneutical primers for this very purpose. Explanations concerning the mechanics of concept formation are integral parts of communicating theological content, while explorations into polyvalent meanings of those concepts are necessary in promoting sincere dialogue with those outside a limited arena of conversation.

Christian faith, as Robert A. Orsi argues in his most recent groundbreaking work, *Between Heaven and Earth*,⁷ is not a matter of doctrinally relevant concepts. Faith is rather a lived reality. The question posed to theology by current historical and ethnographic methods in religious studies is empirical adequacy. The difference between the concept as cliché and the concept alive with its predicates lies precisely in its empirical determination. Abstraction is an inevitability of conceptual thought; the more abstract the concept, the more empty it is of its predicates. Yet theology cannot be allowed to degenerate into abstracted meaninglessness. If this discipline is truly called to represent an understanding of reality, as I believe it is, then it must be tied to real moorings, whether anthropological, historical, psychological, or cultural. Relations to the biblical text, for example, have functioned traditionally as a way of concretizing theological claims. The call to empirical integrity does not imply an abdication of conceptual thinking. Rather, the clarity with which the concepts are empirically determined and communicated will have a bearing on the cultivation of dialogical give-and-take. Theology is neither mission, nor the conveying of information, nor indoctrination,⁸ but it is the mutual search for the truth of a reality that is lived out in infinite determination.

Especially a subject matter as rich, complicated, and metaphysically as imaginative as the Trinity requires more than the simple recitation of trinitarian mantras Schwöbel offers. In a context that either venerates the trinitarian doctrine rather than the living God or a context that scoffs at doctrinal norms, it is the responsibility of Christian theologians committed to the Trinity to give body to this dogma in terms of “lived religion.”⁹ Of all Christian theological doctrines, it is perhaps the Trinity that has been most isolated in its theological exposition from the everyday experience of practicing (Western) Christians. Relegated to metaphysical and epistemological prolegomena, idolized as a formula of orthodoxy, and promoted to a speculative all-encompassing world-historical explanatory principle, the trinitarian worldview is not always as self-evident in discussions of pluralism as Schwöbel

⁷Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 2005.

⁸*Belehrung*, to use Schleiermacher’s term.

⁹Orsi’s phrase from *Between Heaven and Earth*.

assumes. In fact, the task of Christian theology in the wider circumstance of contemporary pluralism is precisely the study of trinitarian faith in devotional gestures, in liturgical practices, and in the daily lives of Christians determining the meaning of their faith in dynamic relation to the three persons of the one God. The Christian faith can be seen in the light of heavenly ordained individuality when the Trinity is brought down to earth in embodied relationships.

Empirical determination of the concept requires a listening to the vibrations, tones, and moods of the experience of faith. A theology responsible to the emerging differentiation of religious experience must open its eyes to those experiences located in regions outside a male-dominated, primarily German and North American context. Yes, German Protestantism is the cradle of Protestant concept formation with world-historical consequences. Nevertheless, the cultivation of theological readership lies precisely with the inclusion of dialogue partners beyond one's linguistic purview. It is here where Schwöbel gravely fails the test of pluralism. A brief look at his index of names reveals his almost exclusive indebtedness to the European male tradition, with a few transatlantic forays. The omission of both theologians emerging from non-European traditions and of female scholars is glaring. Even the three references to "my wife" (*meine Frau*) in the preface¹⁰ are only once met with a concretization of her name, Marlene.¹¹ Enough is enough!

Theological writing on pluralism demands an ethical opening of the field of dialogue partners. Whatever the specific reason—whether mutual enrichment of positions, demonstration of ethical respect, a gesture to epistemological modesty, or the goal of persuasion—a theology responsible to the contemporary context cannot continue to select its conversants from within a tradition privileged by history's contingency. Rather than *assuming* readership, *invitation* should be the privileged ethic.

Schwöbel's book may be thought of as a resource for learning the concepts necessary for passing theological German. At the most, it launches a challenge to contemporary theologians to pay earnest attention to the adequacy of form and language to content. Christian faith is alive in many contexts, and its concepts shimmer with many facets of meaning. When regarded from this perspective, Christianity has something to live, so that theology has something to talk about.

¹⁰ix, xviii.

¹¹xvi.

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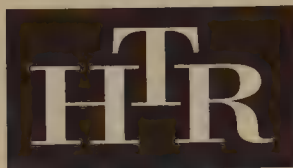
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An Assessment of Buddhist Eco-Philosophy*

Donald K. Swearer
Harvard Divinity School

As a scholar I am expected to deal with my subject matter in an objective way. If this were to mean without emotional concern, and without a personal standpoint, I have to admit failure in advance. . . . I do not hesitate to admit that in giving this lecture my aim is to contribute . . . to a change of attitude and behavior towards nature.¹

In response to the growing global environmental crisis, scholars have begun to interrogate religious traditions as a possible resource for the development of an environmental ethic. Different points of view regarding environmental ethics and religion, or what we refer to more generally as “religion and ecology,” have emerged. At one end of the spectrum, apologists see the world’s religions as a key resource in addressing the environmental crisis; at the other end, critics point to religion as redounding to the crisis. In his controversial 1967 article on Christianity and the environment, Lynn White commends Buddhism for its holistic, egalitarian worldview and its environmentally friendly style of life in contrast to the Biblical worldview and mainstream Christianity, that White sees as promoting human dominance over nature and, hence, contributing to the environmental crisis.² Challenging White’s

* This essay is a revised version of a paper presented at the symposium, “Buddhist Ecology and Environmental Studies,” cosponsored by the Center for the Study of World Religions (CSWR) at Harvard Divinity School, and Dongguk University, Seoul, Korea. The symposium was held at the CSWR, December 9 and 10, 2005.

¹ Lambert Schmithausen, *Buddhism and Nature* (Tokyo: International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1991) 2.

² Lynn White, Jr. “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis,” *Science* 15 (10 March, 1967) 1203–7. White’s essay created a storm of controversy. For example, see Elspeth Whitney, “Lynn White, Ecotheology, and History,” *Environmental Ethics* 15 (1993) 151–69.

reductive view, James Gustafson points out that Western theisms encompass at least five attitudes toward the environment—despotic, dominion over, stewardship of, subordination to, and participation in.³ “Despotism” exemplifies an idolatrous, Baconian, mechanistic, radically utilitarian stance. “Dominion over” extrapolates an attitude from Genesis 1:26, in which God grants human dominion over nature. Gustafson finds that Judaism and Christianity prefer the third attitude, “stewardship,” as a way of understanding nature. “Subordination,” the opposite end of the spectrum from despotism, approximates the attitude of Albert Schweitzer’s, “Only by serving every kind of life do I enter the service of the Creative Will whence all life emanates.” Gustafson finds that the attitude “participation in” harmonizes the most with his own theocentric perspective, in which all human beings participate in the patterns and processes of life in the world grounded in the ultimate power of the divine.⁴ Eco-theology and eco-ethics, moreover, have emerged as major genres of constructive reflection among Christian theologians and ethicists.⁵

Buddhists and scholars of Buddhism in Asia and the West have promoted White’s positive evaluation of Buddhism’s eco-friendly worldview, but recent scholarship has both nuanced and challenged what has been characterized as Buddhist “eco-apologetics.” In this essay I purpose to assess and to evaluate a selection of contributions to the field of Buddhism and ecology.⁶ Far from being inclusive of the broad range of scholarship in this area in both Asian and European languages, my analysis will highlight what I construe as five sometimes overlapping positions regarding Buddhism and the environment. I have labeled this five-fold taxonomy as follows: eco-apologists, eco-critics, eco-constructivists, eco-ethicists, and eco-contextualists.⁷ I regard these categories as suggestive rather than defini-

³ James M. Gustafson, *A Sense of the Divine: The Natural Environment from a Theocentric Perspective* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1994) 77–110.

⁴ Gustafson characterizes these attitudes as “ideal types” in the Weberian sense—mental constructs for heuristic purposes and not necessarily a class into which anything fits perfectly. See also, Peter Harrison, “Subduing the Earth: Genesis 1, Early Modern Science, and the Exploitation of Nature,” *Journal of Religion* 79:1 (January, 1999) 86–109.

⁵ A major contribution to the field of religion and ecology has been made by the Forum on Religion and Ecology, which grew out of a series of eleven conferences that took place at the Center for the Study of World Religions. Nine conference volumes have been published including *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Well-Being of Earth and Humans*, eds. Dieter T. Hessel and Rosemary Radford Ruether (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Center for the Study of World Religions, 2000). This collection of articles provides the most comprehensive overview of work by Christian theologians and ethicists in the field of Christianity and ecology. Among recent particularly noteworthy contributions to eco-theology are Sallie McFague, *Super. Natural Christians: How We Should Love Nature* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1997) and Mark I. Wallace, *Finding God in the Singing River: Christianity, Spirit, Nature* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2005).

⁶ With a few exceptions I am restricting my analysis to English language sources. I hope this brief paper will serve as a prolegomenon to a more encompassing critical study of monographs and research papers in the field of Buddhism and ecology.

⁷ My taxonomy differs from the one proposed by Ian Harris in “Causation and Telos: The Problem of Buddhist Environmental Ethics,” *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 1 (1994) 46–59, which he develops

tive and intend them primarily for heuristic purposes and not as Weberian ideal types. The first position holds that Buddhist environmentalism extends naturally from the Buddhist worldview; the second that the Buddhist worldview does not harmonize with an environmental ethic. The third position maintains that one can construct a Buddhist environmental ethic, though not co-terminus with the Buddhist worldview, from Buddhist texts and doctrinal tenets; the fourth, that one should evaluate a viable Buddhist environmental ethic in terms of Buddhist ethics rather than inferred from the Buddhist worldview. The fifth position holds that the most effective Buddhist environmental ethic takes its definition in terms of particular contexts and situations.

■ Eco-Apologists

The fruit of Buddhism—mindful living cultivates a view of human beings, nature, and their relationship that is fundamentally ecological. Awareness opens our perception to the interdependence and fragility of all life, and our indebtedness to countless beings, living and dead, past and present, near and far. If we have any real identity at all in Buddhism, it is the ecology itself—a massive interdependent, self-causing dynamic energy-event against a backdrop of ceaseless change.⁸

Many writings on Buddhist ecology promote the normative position that the Buddhist worldview remains inherently eco-friendly and attuned to the natural environment. Three standard English language anthologies in the field—*Dharma Gaia: A Harvest of Essays in Buddhism and Ecology*,⁹ *Buddhism and Ecology*,¹⁰ and *Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism*,¹¹—explicate and justify this position using a wide ambit of texts that range from the Mahāratnakūta Sūtra to Thich Nhat Hanh and the Dalai Lama. The *Avatamsaka Sūtra* (Hua Yen or Flower Ornament Sutra) remains one of the most often cited classical Indian Mahayana

as follows: 1) uncritical endorsement of Buddhist environmental ethics by traditional guardians of doxic truth such as the Dalai Lama; 2) positive interpretations by Japanese and North American activist scholars focusing on identifying doctrinal bases from which an environmental ethic can be constructed (e.g. universal Buddha nature); 3) a critical, historical perspective represented by Lambert Schmithausen who attempts to devise an authentic response to the environmental crisis; 4) the rejection of the possibility of Buddhist environmental ethics on textual and historical grounds exemplified by Noriaki Hakamaya. For Lambert Schmithausen's analysis of Noriaki Hakamaya see *Buddhism and Nature* (1990) 53–62. In "Getting to Grips with Buddhist Environmentalism: A Provisional Typology," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* (1995), Ian Harris finds four types of discourses among eco-Buddhists: eco-spirituality, eco-justice, eco-traditionalism, and eco-apologists.

⁸ Allan Hunt Badiner, ed. *Dharma Gaia: A Harvest of Essays in Buddhism and Ecology* (Berkeley, Calif.: Parallax Press, 1990), xiv–xv.

⁹ Badiner, ed. *Dharma Gaia*.

¹⁰ Martine Batchelor and Kerry Brown, eds. *Buddhism and Ecology* (New York, N.Y.: Cassell, 1992).

¹¹ Stephanie Kaza and Kenneth Kraft, eds. *Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism* (Boston, Mass.: Shambhala Publications, 2000).

texts to which writers ascribe an ecological significance. One offers this important scripture and the metaphor of the Jewel Net of Indra, as evidence that Buddhism, the Hua Yen tradition in particular, views the cosmos as an infinitely repeated inter-relationship among all the members of the cosmos, which Francis Cook likens to a cosmic ecology: "Each individual is at once the cause for the whole and is caused by the whole, and what is called existence is a vast body made up of an infinity of individuals all sustaining each other and defining each other."¹² Since the majority of sources in these anthologies come from contemporary rather than classical texts, McFarlane has identified the eco-apologist position with Engaged Buddhism.¹³

Within the Theravāda ambit, Lily de Silva reads the *Aggañña Sutta* and the *Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta* as providing a template for the interdependence of humankind and nature that links together human moral degeneration and the degradation of nature. Furthermore, she finds in the Pāli *jātakas* the lesson that an understanding of *karma* and rebirth "prepares the Buddhist to adopt a sympathetic attitude toward animals."¹⁴ As an example of the Buddha's disciples' regard for natural beauty as a source of aesthetic satisfaction, De Silva quotes Mahākāshyapa's "detached sense of appreciation" of the natural environment (*Theragāthā* vv.1070–71): "Fair uplands rain-refreshed, and resonant / With crested creatures' cries antiphonal / Lone heights where silent Rishis oft resort / Those are the hills wherein my soul delights."¹⁵

Eco-apologists find in the personal example of the Buddha and Buddhist monks a model of environmentally sensitive behavior. Stephanie Kaza observes, "The courage and inspiration of the Buddha and the *bodhisattvas* . . . are helpful to me in examining the spiritual dimension of the environmental crisis."¹⁶ Eco-apologists appeal to the simple lifestyle of Buddhist monks as providing an example of how to live nonacquisitively and point out that *vinaya* rules prohibit monks from cutting down trees, from eating ten kinds of meat of wild animals, and from contaminating water. As proof of the importance of trees and forests in early Buddhism, they point out that the Buddha was born, achieved his awakening, and died under trees, and that Buddhists prize forest dwelling as an ideal environment in which to practice the religious life.

Beyond appealing to particular texts and the exemplary life of the Buddha, to *arāhant* monks, and to *bodhisattvas*, eco-apologists ascribe an ecological significance to seminal Buddhist doctrines, in particular, *paṭicca samuppāda* (interdependent

¹² Francis, H. Cook, "The Jewel Net of Indra," in *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989), 215.

¹³ Stewart McFarlane, "Nature and Buddha-nature: The Ecological Dimensions of East Asian Buddhism Critically Considered." (kr.buddhism.org/zenkoan/stewart_mcfarlane.htm).

¹⁴ Lily De Silva, "Early Buddhist Attitudes toward Nature," in *Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism* (ed. Stephanie Kaza and Kenneth Kraft; Boston, Mass.: Shambala Publications, 2000), 96–97.

¹⁵ De Silva, 96–97, 101.

¹⁶ Stephanie Kaza, "Planting Seeds of Joy," in *Earth and Spirit* (ed. Fritz Hull; New York, N.Y.: Continuum, 1993), 137.

co-arising), *anattā* (not-self), *suññatā* (emptiness), and *tathāgatagarbha* (the womb of suchness). They make the general claim that these teachings represent a nondualistic, nonhierarchical, holistic worldview, which conjoins all sentient beings, humans and animals; some schools of Buddhist thought also include insentient nature. In the resonant prose of the late Thai monk, Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu, “The entire cosmos is a cooperative. The sun, moon, and stars live together as a cooperative. The same is true for humans and animals, trees, and the earth. When we realize that the world is a mutual, interdependent, cooperative enterprise . . . then we can build a noble environment.”¹⁷ Joanna Macy, borrowing from Gregory Bateson and systems theory, interprets the not-self doctrine as an encompassing “ecological self” that identifies with the wider reaches of life.¹⁸ In schematic form I have conceptualized Buddhist environmentalists as connecting sentient—and in some traditions nonsentient—entities on four levels: existential, moral, cosmological, and ontological.¹⁹ Existentially entities are conjoined through the doctrine of shared suffering (*dukkha*) which eco-apologists extend to nature; as Stephanie Kaza writes, “To see a once-whole forest clear-cut to stumps, the soil eroding, the wildlife gone, is to experience the impact of environmental suffering.”²⁰ Morally and cosmologically the doctrines of *karma* and rebirth conjoin all sentient beings in a karmic continuum traditionally divided into three world levels and five or six rebirth realms. Ontologically the concepts of *tathāgatagarbha* (womb of suchness) and universal Buddha nature (*buddhakāya*) point to a common ground of inter-being or inter-becoming.

■ Eco-Critics

I for one find it hard to deny that the overwhelming majority of the canonical materials suggests that in early Buddhism it was just a *matter of course* to strive, in the first place, for one’s own self-perfection and release.²¹

I . . . [also] find it hard to determine to what extent . . . focusing on the positive goal of ‘*Nirvana in this life*’ actually involved an evaluation of nature substantially different from that of the strand focussing on the unsatisfactoriness of existence and the world where it takes place.²²

¹⁷ Bhikkhu Buddhādāsa, *Phutāsasanik Kap Kan Anurak Thamachat* [Buddhists and the Care of Nature] (Bangkok: Komol Thimthong Foundation, 1990), 35.

¹⁸ Joanna Macy, “The Greening of the Self,” in *Dharma Gaia* (ed. Allan Hunt Badiner; Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1990) 53–63, at 56.

¹⁹ Donald K. Swearer, “Principles and Poetry, Places and Stories: The Resources of Buddhist Ecology,” *Daedalus* 130 (2001) 225–241, at 226.

²⁰ Kaza, “Planting Seeds of Joy,” 139.

²¹ Lambert Schmithausen, “The Early Buddhist Tradition and Ecological Ethics,” *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 4 (1997) 1–74, at 46.

²² Schmithausen, “Early Buddhist Tradition,” 42.

The critics of Buddhist eco-apologists contend that Buddhist foundational documents lack any explicit discussion of what today we would label environmental ethics for today's quintessentially modern ecological concerns.²³ While the eco-critics may sympathize with the intention behind the eco-apologists' project, they judge it a serious distortion of normative Buddhist teachings and historical traditions. Although citing misrepresentations of East Asian Buddhist traditions (e.g., Noriaka Hakamaya's attack on the concepts of Buddha nature, *tathatā* (suchness and nondualism), they focus their critique, in particular, on what they consider a misreading of early Indian Buddhism. They argue that the soteriological focus of early Buddhism based on a negative assessment of the realm of sense experience including "nature" as fundamentally unsatisfactory (*dukkha*) and subject to change (*anicca*), does not provide the grounds for an environmental ethic. Furthermore, they charge that the tradition has a primarily anthropocentric, not biocentric, focus on spiritual liberation. At best, the nonhuman environment occupies a positive place only as the context for the pursuit of transmundane ends. Eco-apologists, in response, object to the narrowness of this criticism and contend that from the outset the way of the Buddha has remained broader than a narrowly construed quest for Nirvāṇa without regard for other sentient beings and natural surroundings.

Although I began this section on eco-critics with two quotations from Lambert Schmithausen's *Buddhism and Nature*, I agree with Ian Harris that one should evaluate Schmithausen's work on Buddhism and ecology primarily as an effort to devise an *authentic* Buddhist environmental ethic based on a critical, historical reading of Buddhist texts (in Harris's nomenclature a "neo-traditionalist" approach). In this sense, Schmithausen fits best into my taxonomy as an eco-constructivist. Even though Harris's personal sympathies reside with Schmithausen, as a critical scholar he identifies with Horiaki Hakamaya, who rejects the possibility of Buddhist environmental ethics on the grounds that the doctrinal standpoint of canonical Buddhism implies a negation of the natural realm.

For the purposes of my schematic analysis, Ian Harris will exemplify the eco-critics position. With others in this category, Harris holds that the primacy of the spiritual goal privileges humans over animals and nature. Although humans and animals have interconnected destinies, the tradition regards animals as unfortunate because they cannot grow in the *dharmma* and *vinaya* and cannot serve as monks.²⁴ The plant world fares no better. Harris summarizes the canonical view of nature as either something needing improvement or cultivation or confrontation in a therapeutic encounter.²⁵ Above all, Harris finds the dysteleological nature of Buddhist cosmology and causality incompatible with an environmental ethic. Even

²³ Ian Harris, "Buddhism and Ecology," in *Contemporary Buddhist Ethics* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2000) 113.

²⁴ Ian Harris, "How Environmentalist Is Buddhism?" *Religion* 21 (1991) 105.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 107.

the vaunted Hua Yen vision of interpenetration has a dysteleological worldview that negates creativity, novelty, and the exercise of free will. It cannot account for purposive change, since it conceives the realm of conditioned things in symmetrical terms. Conditionality so understood implies the full equality and mutuality of interpenetrating entities.²⁶ Consequently it negates a social and eco-activist agenda, for if everything depends on everything else, then the black rhino depends on the hydrogen bomb, the rain forest on the nuclear waste dump, and so forth.²⁷

Harris characterizes attempts to find an environmental ethic in Buddhism (i.e., "ecoBuddhism") as a modern American initiative to articulate an authentically Buddhist response to current environmental problems. This response, he writes, grew out of the American environmental movement of the 1960s dominated by educated liberal elites and interreligious environmental dialogues with a liberal socio-political agenda.²⁸ Building further on insights from Antony Giddens's *The Consequences of Modernity*,²⁹ Harris sees Buddhist environmentalism as an expression of a type of globalization that promotes an erosion of culture-specific boundaries and a homogenization or uniformity of attitude that overrides significant differences in doctrine and practice: "It is the impact of modernity and of globalization, in particular, that has tended to encourage traditional religions, such as Christianity and Buddhism, to move to a closer intellectual and emotional harmony the more they move away from the geographical locations that have given them their specific cultural and historical forms."³⁰ Harris finds a shared utopianism among the representatives of this collective eco-religiosity, namely, an effort to reestablish an original purity of nature, a biospheric community, a soteric this-worldly eco-activism that has become a virtual religion in and of itself.

Harris contends that supporters of a Buddhist environmental ethic, in particular, have shown indifference to the history and complexity of the Buddhist tradition and have uncritically appropriated modern, globalized discourse. In doing so they have departed from the critical spirit that has played a major role in the history of Buddhism to the modern period. Furthermore, even a cursory examination of the languages, doctrines, and historical permutations of Buddhism debunks any notion of a Buddhist environmental ethic as such, just as one can find no Buddhism as such. Nevertheless, Harris sympathizes with the aim of the eco-apologists. While seeing this position as representing a significant departure from the traditional

²⁶ John McClellan satirizes ecological non-dualism in "Nodual Ecology," *Tricycle* (1993), 60, "In any discussion of deep Ecology—or rocks, clouds, rivers, and mountains—one should include kitchen tables, cars, computers, stuffed animals, and nuclear reactors."

²⁷ Ian Harris, "Buddhist Environmental Ethics and Detraditionalization: The Case of EcoBuddhism," *Religion* 25 (1995), 205.

²⁸ Ian Harris, "Getting to Grips with Buddhist Environmentalism: A Provisional Typology," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* (1995), 173.

²⁹ Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1990).

³⁰ Harris, "Getting to Grips," 175.

Buddhist worldview, he acknowledges that all traditions must change in order to adapt and to flourish. Therefore, to reject eco-Buddhism as a sham, supermarket religion poses a problem from a broad, historical perspective: "Consideration of the genesis of ecoBuddhism and of its activist programme suggests that it shouldn't be characterized as a deviation from traditional norms but that it should be seen as an example of a vigorous tradition engaged in a healthy process of reflexive apologetics."³¹

■ Eco-Constructivists

Stating the traditional Buddhist Attitudes of not injuring (*ahimsa*), benevolence (*mettā/maitrī*) and compassion (*karunā*) to entail an "ecological" behaviour is surely justified in so far as these attitudes are not limited to human beings as their object but include also other living beings, especially animals. Still, it should be clear that neither of these attitudes has, primarily, an "ecological" purport.³²

Eco-constructivists adopt a critical stance toward the formation of a Buddhist environmental ethic based on a normative commitment rather than on the tools of critical scholarship. Nevertheless, using these tools they seek to uncover ecologically positive elements in Buddhist textual and historical traditions on which to build an environmental ethic. Eco-constructivists, such as Lambert Schmithausen, contend that a viable Buddhist environmental ethic depends on one's ascribing a positive value to nature and to natural diversity without losing the essentials of the tradition. In his analysis, the soteriological focus of early Indian Buddhism has, at best, only a "passive" ecological significance, although later forms of Mahāyāna offer more promise. He shares with eco-critics the view that early Buddhism did not ascribe any inherent value to nature or to life as such or to species or to eco-systems. The ultimate value of early Buddhism does not lie in nature or in culture. Ultimately the issue involves not the preserving, restoring, transforming or subjugating of nature but rather the liberation (*vimutti*) of all constituents of existence.³³ Even so, one can construe the soteriological orientation of early Indian Buddhism to have ecological consequences in that the person who has attained liberation, motivated by sympathy and compassion, acts on behalf of other sentient beings. These virtues, however, highlighted in the Mahāyāna *bodhisattva* ideal, serve primarily as ethical rather than ecological terms. The same holds true for the concept of interdependent co-arising (*paṭicca samuppāda*)—primarily psychological, ethical, and spiritual in nature—the knowledge of which leads to the overcoming of ignorance and desire. In Schmithausen's view, "this analysis of the presuppositions of individual bondage and liberation could [not] without a radical reinterpretation, provide a basis for

³¹ Harris, "Getting to Grips," 207.

³² Schmithausen, *Buddhism and Nature*, 32.

³³ Schmithausen, "Early Buddhist Tradition," 11.

ecological ethics based on an intrinsic value of natural diversity and beauty.”³⁴ The doctrine of rebirth, which posits that animal forms may have taken on or presently take on the forms of one’s relatives, seems closer to an ecological sense of interconnectedness even though anthropocentric in its intent. In Hua Yen Buddhism, however, the principle of universal interdependence assumes more resemblance to the structural principle of scientific ecology.

Although the emphasis in Buddhist ethics lies on overcoming desire and greed, as framed in terms of spiritual practice and ascetic virtues, and does not ascribe a positive value to nature as such, Buddhist ethics do have environmental consequences and ecologically beneficial effects. The Buddhist values of non-killing, loving-kindness, sympathy, and compassion have even more pertinence to an ecological ethic. Although the principal of non-harming or non-killing (*ahimsa*) began as protection against the vengeance of injured animals in the world beyond, and one associates loving-kindness and compassion with states of consciousness attained in meditation, these virtues have ethical significance beyond one’s own spiritual benefit. To construe them as constituting an ecological ethic that promotes the protection of species or as an apologia for biodiversity distorts the historical tradition; they do not, however, come without ecological import. In a similar vein, although one should read King Asoka’s fifth pillar edict prohibiting the slaughter of animals as a critique of Brahmanical ritual practices and not as conserving species, it does minimize the killing of individual animals. Both the Buddhist eco-constructivist and the eco-critic hold that early Buddhism’s focus on the achievement of a soteriological goal problematizes an environmental reading of the tradition. An eco-constructivist such as Schmithausen, however, believes, nonetheless, that selected teachings of the tradition do have positive ecological consequences.³⁵

The distinguished Thai scholar monk, P. A. Payutto, echoes the eco-constructivist effort to derive environmentally salient lessons from texts and historical traditions without sacrificing the essentials of the tradition. He finds the potential for promoting a positive, beneficial attitude toward the environment in three moral virtues: gratitude (*kataññū*), loving-kindness (*mettā*), and happiness (*sukha*). These virtues he finds embodied in a passage from the *Khuddaka Nikāya*: “A person who sits or sleeps in the shade of a tree should not cut off a tree branch. One who injures such a friend is evil.” Payutto observes, “This maxim reminds us that the shade of a tree we enjoy is enjoyed by others as well. A tree is like a friend that we have no reason to injure. To injure a tree is like hurting a friend. Such a virtuous attitude toward nature will prevent us from destructive behavior, on the one hand, and will prompt helpful actions, on the other.”³⁶ In an even broader sense, Payutto links human happiness to the natural environment. Citing the historical example

³⁴ Schmithausen, “Early Buddhist Tradition,” 12–13.

³⁵ See, in particular, Schmithausen, *Buddhism and Nature*, 29–52.

³⁶ P. A. Payutto, *Khon Thai Kap Pa* [Thais and the Forest] (Bangkok: Association for Agriculture and Biology, 1994) 22–23.

of forest dwelling monks, he contends that throughout the history of Thailand, Buddhism has seen the forest as a teacher of mind and spirit and that living within such a natural environment engenders a greater sense of happiness and well-being.³⁷ Payutto does not derive an ecological ethic based on the inherent value of the nature from such examples taken from text and tradition but does discover teachings pertinent to what Schmithausen would characterize as an “authentic” Buddhist environmental ethic.

■ Eco-Ethicists

I encourage people worldwide, especially the ones who are . . . indoctrinated by capitalist triumphalism and consumerism, to look to the life of the Buddha—and to see him simultaneously as one who reached the pinnacle of liberation through his enlightenment, and also as a simple and humble monk. In fact, simplicity and humility enable the Buddha to achieve enlightenment.³⁸

Buddhists link the interests and concerns of religion and ecology to an ethic of moderation, the Buddhist “Middle Way” (*majjhima paṭipatā*), as promoting a less environmentally harmful lifestyle; in the words of the popular bumper sticker, “Live simply so that others many simply live!” Over thirty years ago, E. F. Schumacher’s *Small Is Beautiful* advocated a nonexploitative “Buddhist economics” lifestyle of simplicity, nonviolence, and moderate consumption: “The teaching of the Buddha . . . enjoins a reverent and nonviolent attitude not only to all sentient beings but also . . . to trees”.³⁹ Inspired by Schumacher’s vision, Buddhist social activists and environmentalists have become vociferous critics of the consumerist values associated with economic globalization.⁴⁰ From a philosophical perspective, however, one finds even more interesting the effort to view Buddhist environmental ethics from the perspective of virtue theory.

Recent studies of Theravāda Buddhism have proposed an analogical relationship between Buddhist ethics and the tradition of virtue ethics in the West (e.g., those of the Stoics, Epicureans, and Aristotle). Damien Keown, for example, observes formal parallels between the ideal of human perfection as taught by the Bud-

³⁷ Payutto, *Khon Tahi Kap Pa*, 33.

³⁸ Sulak Sivaraksa, *Conflict, Culture, Change: Engaged Buddhism in a Globalizing World* (Boston, Mass.: Wisdom Publications, 2005) 36.

³⁹ Ernst Friedrich Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered* (London: Blond and Briggs, 1973) 56.

⁴⁰ See for example, Sulak Sivaraksa, *Conflict, Culture, Change*; see also *Hooked! Buddhist Writings on Greed, Desire, and the Urge to Consume* (ed. Stephanie Kaza; Boston, Mass.: Shambala Publications, 2005). From a Christian perspective see Sallie McFague, *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2001): “We North American middle-class Christians need to live differently in order to love nature, we need to think differently . . . about . . . who we are in the scheme of things . . . The market ideology has become our way of life, almost our religion, telling us who we are (consumers) and what the goal of life is (making money).”

dha and Aristotle despite differences in social and cultural contexts,⁴¹ and James Whitehill sees the cultivation of the *paramitās* (“awakened virtue”) as the heart of Buddhist ethics.⁴² From an environmental perspective, Whitehall characterizes the *paramitās* as biocentric and ecological, based on his understanding of the relational and processional nature of the self-concept in Buddhism, but does not develop this notion in the direction of an environmental ethic. Two British scholars at the University of Durham, David E. Cooper and Simon P. James, however, have undertaken such a project on different grounds.⁴³ I shall refer to their case for the relationship between the cultivation of virtue and environmental ethics in arguing that in constructing a Buddhist environmental ethic, we give preference to the Buddhist vision of human flourishing over and above reconstructing seminal teachings from the Buddhist worldview (e.g., *paṭicca-samuppāda*, *anattā*, *suññatā*, *tathāgatagarbha*) from an ecological perspective. In general terms, moreover, I believe that the most compelling contribution to environmental discourse that the world’s religions can make globally concerns the area of what I have termed an “ecology of human flourishing” that includes the natural world in its purview of the common good.⁴⁴ I take as an example from Thai Buddhism the site called the Garden of Empowering Liberation (Wat Suan Mokkhabalārama) established by Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu outside of Chaiya, south Thailand, in 1936. Wat Suan Mokkha embodies a sustainable lifestyle grounded in the values of moderation, simplicity and nonacquisitiveness. In this place all forms of life—humans, animals, and plants—live as a cooperative microcosm of a larger ecosystem.

Cooper and James challenge the dichotomy between intrinsic and instrumental value made by environmental ethicists, who claim that intrinsic value constitutes the *sine qua non* of environmental ethics. In defining environmental ethics as “philosophical reflection on how human beings should relate to and act toward nonhuman life in natural environments,” they shift the focus to human agency.⁴⁵ Furthermore, by focusing on those traits and dispositions of character essential to a good and realized human life, they problematize the dichotomy in ethical theory between deontological and consequentialist ethics, namely, whether one should judge the rightness or wrongness of an action in terms of principles of obligation and duty, or whether or not they produce desirable results.⁴⁶ Buddhist environmental ethics

⁴¹ Damien Keown, *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics* (New York, N.Y.: St. Martins Press, 1993) 193.

⁴² James Whitehill, “Buddhism and the Virtues,” in *Contemporary Buddhist Ethics* (ed. Damien Keown; Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000) 24–26.

⁴³ David E. Cooper and Simon P. James, *Buddhism, Virtue and Environment* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2005). For a forthcoming book on a virtues approach to environmental ethics, see Pragati Sahni, *Environmental Ethics: A Virtues Approach* (London: Routledge, 2006).

⁴⁴ Donald K. Swearer, “Principles and Poetry,” 231.

⁴⁵ Cooper and James, *Buddhism*, 3.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

is most properly generated by “an account of the virtues and their implications for treatment of the natural world” rather than consideration of rights or utility.⁴⁷

Buddhist eco-ethicists agree with eco-critics and eco-constructivists in rejecting ecological holists, who consider human beings and nature inseparable. Cooper and James assert that the canonical teachings of *paṭicca-samuppāda*, *anattā*, and *suññatā*, on which holists make claims of inseparability, represent “no more than a gesture at the form which explanations of natural processes would take” and that such asseverations “provide a very fragile basis on which to erect any substantial account of the empirical relationship between human beings and the rest of the living world.”⁴⁸ Furthermore, eco-apologists, who espouse the view of inseparability, do not convincingly demonstrate how ecological holism yields an enlightened environmental ethic. As Cooper and James put it, “recitation of the doctrines of conditioned co-arising and not-self is, by itself, quite incapable of showing that ‘we should not harm nature’ rather than exploit it whatever ways ‘maximize’ the ‘fitness’ of human genetic material.”⁴⁹ In contrast to an eco-critic such as Ian Harris, who attacks eco-Buddhist apologists for fabricating what he considers an inauthentic Buddhist environmentalism, the eco-ethicist holds that one can and should read a Buddhist environmental ethic as a natural extension of Buddhist virtue ethics. Such a move reflects a reconstruction of a “Buddhist environmental ethic on the basis *both* of a wider philosophy *and* explicit remarks found in the texts on environmental matters.”⁵⁰

In the tradition of Western virtue ethics, Cooper and James divide their analysis into an ethic of self- and other-regard. Self-regarding virtues consist of humility, self-mastery, and equanimity—components in the process of self-cultivation by which one attains “nirvanic felicity.”⁵¹ As elements of an environmental ethic, they examine the moral implications of these virtues for a proper way to regard and to treat animals and plants. Other-regarding virtues discussed by Cooper and James as antidotes to environmental vices include solicitude, nonviolence, and so called “responsibleness,” the latter being an antidote to overwhelming despair in the face of global environmental degradation.⁵² For the purposes of this essay, the details of how Cooper and James construct an environmental ethic from Buddhist virtue ethics have less importance than their general position. Eco-ethicists share the eco-constructivist’s respect for the integrity of the Buddhist tradition and their suspicion of eco-holism; however, they shift the focus of Buddhism and ecology from an evaluation of the ecological saliency of the Buddhist world view to a Buddhist environmental ethic firmly grounded in the received tradition of virtue

⁴⁷ Ibid., 108.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 110.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 112.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 118.

⁵¹ Ibid., 118.

⁵² Ibid., 127.

with its strong emphasis on character transformation. Furthermore, the eco-ethicist emphasis on human flourishing underscores a positive, goal-oriented vision for the development of a sustainable lifestyle as an essential ingredient to the achievement of happiness.

■ Eco-Contextualists

Suthep mountain's dome-like shape is like an immense replica of the ancient Sanchi style stupa, a gift to Lanna by the Powers of Creation. Stupas are reliquaries of saints. More than that, they are a structural representation of the very essence of Buddhism. Plant and animal life are like Nature's frescoes, both beautifying and exemplifying the Law [*dhamma*]. . . . Although sometimes not being able to explain why rationally, the people of northern Thailand want to preserve Suthep mountain as it was given to them by Creation, as untouched as possible.⁵³

The above selection from an editorial appeared in one of Thailand's major English language newspapers as a response to the national government's decision to allow a private company to construct an electric cable car from the base to the top of the mountain that overlooks Chiang Mai. This largest city in northern Thailand represented the dominant Tai kingdom in the region prior to its integration into the modern Thai nation-state at the turn of the twentieth century. One of the most revered Buddhist temples in the country and a major pilgrimage site, Wat Phrathat Doi Suthep, sits near the summit of Mount Suthep. The mountain's legendary history incorporates the autochthonous pre-Thai (Lawa) guardian spirits, Phu Sae and Ya Sae, and the Lawa cultural traditions personified by a tribal chief, Vilaṅkha. The history also includes the protective power of a mythologized Brahmanical sage, Vasudeva; the founding of the first petty kingdom associated with the quasi-historical Mon queen, Cāmadevī; and Buddhist practices of relic veneration that are intimately connected with the authority and power of Buddhist, in this case, Thai kings. Tradition states that King Ku'ena (1355–1385) built the *stūpa* that enshrined a miraculous Buddha relic brought from the Tai kingdom of Sukhothai by the charismatic monk, Sumana Thera. In short, Mount Suthep stands as the locus of traditions that have shaped the cultural identity of the Lawa, Mon, and Thai populations that have resided in northern Thailand from before and since the founding of Chiang Mai by Mengrai in the late thirteenth century.

Suthep Mountain dominates the physical environment of the valley and the city of Chiang Mai and looms large as an icon of the cultural traditions that have defined northern Thailand for centuries. The prospect of a cable car that would convey tourists to the holy temple near its summit aroused the ire of the Chiang Mai citizenry, and Phra Bodhiramṣī, the assistant ecclesiastical governor of Chiang Mai

⁵³ *Bangkok Post* 30 (April 5, 1986) 5. I have discussed this case at greater length in Swearer, "Principles and Poetry," 225–41.

Province, lent the authority of the monastic *sangha* to the anti-cable car movement. Phra Bodhirāṃsī, the Bangkok Post editorial writer, and many others perceived the cable car as a profanation of a sacred site and a threat to northern Thai cultural identity. In this instance we find an example of what I have labeled a Buddhist “eco-contextualist” response to the endangerment of a natural site perceived as a sacred icon. The pressures to develop Doi Suthep for its commercial value to the tourism industry threatened the mountain’s natural environment and its spiritual integrity. The fact that northern Thais see the mountain as a sacred landscape constituted a major factor in challenging both private and government efforts to build a cable car to its summit. Obviously, Suthep mountain holds a unique place in the cultural imagination of northern Thais; this example, however, suggests a more general truth, namely, that religious-cultural narratives of place can make a crucial contribution to environmental ethics. Indeed, when it comes to inspiring concrete action to counter environmental degradation, such stories may play a more decisive role than an appeal to philosophical principles with ecological import, for stories and traditions of cultural practice have the power to touch the deepest sensibilities of personal and social identity. Ongoing narratives that connect myth and history, past and present, humans and nature, give an environmental ethic a personal, social, and cultural grounding that it otherwise lacks.⁵⁴

I could cite numerous diverse instances from other locations throughout Buddhist Asia. In her CSWR Buddhist Ecology and Environmental Studies symposium paper, “Ritual and Risk: Buddhist Environmental in Practice,” Susan M. Darlington provides several examples of “environmental monks” (*phra anurak pa*), who have developed strategies for protecting natural habitats in specific locations in Thailand. Particularly noteworthy is the practice of “ordaining trees” to protect community forests under threat of commercial development.⁵⁵ Zhiru Ng’s symposium paper, “Purifying the Mind, Sanctifying the Earth,” examines a built environment, the main hall of the Compassion Relief Movement in eastern Taiwan founded by the charismatic nun Zhengyan (1937–), as an example of the incorporation of environmental practice into architecture. This hall represents an intertwining of Buddhist and ecological ideals into a single material structure as a continuous presence in the daily lives of the movements’ monastic and lay followers.

The literature in the field of Buddhism and ecology has grown exponentially in the past decade. This brief essay has made an effort to describe its diversity in terms of a fivefold scheme of classification: eco-apologists, eco-critics, eco-constructivists, eco-ethicists, and eco-contextualists. The specific question of what constitutes an “authentic” Buddhist ecological ethic invites the more basic question of what constitutes “authentic” Buddhism. As in all historic religions, Buddhism has evolved and changed over time and place. Today if the Buddhist tradition “is

⁵⁴ Swearer, “Principles and Poetry,” 240.

⁵⁵ Susan M. Darlington, “The Ordination of a Tree: The Buddhist Ecology Movement in Thailand,” *Ethnology* 37 (1998) 1–15.

to remain a living tradition, it has to supply answers to new vital questions and . . . accommodate its heritage to a new situation by means of explication, re-interpretation, re-organization or even creative extension or change. One of these questions is doubtless whether or not an ecological ethics is required."⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Schmithausen, "Early Buddhist Tradition," 6.

God of All the World: Universalism and Developing Monotheism in Isaiah 40–66*

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The relationship between Israel, the nations, and Israel's God in the eschatological future has long occupied exegetes and theologians. The meaning of the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion and the servant's charge to become a "covenant to the people (ברית עם), a light to the nations (אור גוים)" (Isa 42:6) is a significant locus of dispute. Some argue that here the text charges the Israelites to missionize the Gentiles, while others contend that Second Isaiah holds only a passing interest in the status of foreigners. These disagreements are not unfounded, for the text itself contains seemingly contradictory exclamations right next to one another. In Isa 45:22, for example, YHWH proclaims: "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth!" In the very next verses, however, Isaiah depicts the nations as subservient to Israel and elsewhere as even licking the dust of the former exiles' feet (49:23)—an image which, at least at first glance, seems incompatible with the notion that foreigners and Israelites similarly benefit from YHWH's saving acts.

What should one make of these conflicting passages within the text and their contradictory interpretations? Does Second Isaiah indeed proclaim the universal mission of Israel to bring salvation to the Gentiles, or does the prophet speak only to the exiled Israelites to give them hope in the promise of YHWH's impending redemption of his chosen people?¹ To determine the most likely intent of Second

* We would like to dedicate this article to our colleague, teacher, and friend, Professor Karl P. Donfried, upon his retirement from the Department of Religion and Biblical Literature at Smith College.

¹ There are medial positions as well, such as that advocated in D. W. Van Winkle, "The Relationship of the Nations to YHWH and to Israel in Isaiah 40–55," *VT* 35 (1985) 446–58, in which he argues that the complexities of Second Isaiah's language indicate that the nations attain salvation yet are subservient to Israel. See also Robert Martin-Achard, *A Light to the Nations: A Study of the*

Isaiah, one must understand these passages not in isolation from their context, but through careful study of Second Isaiah's overarching rhetorical aims. Close attention to the larger collection reveals that Second Isaiah's primary themes include Israel's election and the exaltation of Israel's God. As will be shown, Second Isaiah's "universalism" flows from and is conditioned by these twin concerns. The failure to note this close linkage has led many scholars to misunderstand certain passages within this corpus. Second Isaiah does envision a universal recognition of YHWH, but this does not equal a universal conversion to the worship of YHWH. By proclaiming God's sovereignty to the highest degree, Second Isaiah envisions all nations acknowledging the legitimacy of Israel's God, a notion that has implications for the status of the deities worshipped by other nations.

Second Isaiah exalts YHWH to such an extent that the author strongly questions, even denies, the existence of other deities. He refers to the idols of the nations as graven images empty of form and power. This view represents a distinct shift in the ancient Israelite understanding of foreign deities. While earlier biblical texts maintained that Israel was to worship only the God YHWH, this did not exclude the existence of other deities (Deut 32:8; Mic 4:5). Despite having a position subordinate to Israel's God, the gods of the foreign nations nonetheless remained divine beings who ruled their respective nations (Judg 11:24). Though described throughout Deuteronomy and the Psalms in disparaging terms, the foreign deities and their iconic representations appear in Second Isaiah as powerless objects as part of the central rhetorical aim: the universal exaltation of Israel's God.

Thus, a thorough examination of these enigmatic texts in Isaiah must begin with a view of their context within both the larger Isaianic collection and the Hebrew Bible more generally. Indeed, discussions of the universalism in Second and Third Isaiah have frequently ignored these larger contexts when evaluating individual verses or short passages within each collection. This paper aims to engage in a careful, holistic reading of the relevant passages within both collections in order to produce a balanced assessment of the precise type of universalism advocated by various highly contested texts. We hope to demonstrate the following: 1) While Second Isaiah contains many passages that speak of YHWH in cosmic and universalistic terms, it has little concern for the nations themselves aside from their role in asserting YHWH's sovereignty. 2) The latest passages in Third Isaiah show a growing interest in the fate of non-Israelite individuals and nations. 3) The shift between the status of foreigners in Second and Third Isaiah may result from the fact that Second Isaiah's monotheism opened up new theological horizons, the import of which was realized only when changing socio-historical circumstances produced

Old Testament Conception of Israel's Mission to the World (trans. John Penny Smith; Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1962) 17; trans. of *Israël et les nations. La perspective missionnaire de l'Ancien Testament* (Neuchâtel: Delechaux & Niestlé, 1959), who notes that the salvation of the Gentiles in Second Isaiah is contingent on their becoming Israel's subordinates and slaves.

greater interest in the status of the Gentiles. Such a study has implications not only for our understanding of the ancient text, but also for the history of Jewish and Christian interpretation as well as modern Jewish-Christian dialogue.

■ The Divine Landscape: Foreign Gods in the Hebrew Bible

While Yehezkel Kaufmann once argued that Israelite religion was monotheistic from the very beginning and remained “sealed off” from influences of its pagan neighbors,² the scholarly consensus now upholds that early Israelite religion did not espouse monotheism at the outset, but that the worship of one god gradually developed into a monotheistic exclusion of all other gods.

Early biblical texts affirm the existence of the gods of the foreign nations. Joshua, for example, implores the people to choose the god to whom they will give allegiance: “Choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD [YHWH]” (Josh 24:15b). While Israel has her God, the nations also have their own gods whom they serve, and Joshua does not question their potency.

Similarly in Deuteronomy, Israel’s commitment to YHWH does not imply that other deities do not exist. Because of the book’s great emphasis on Israel’s election, Deuteronomy upholds the necessity of Israel’s exclusive worship of YHWH. While Israel worships YHWH alone, the foreign deities remain appropriate objects of the nations’ devotion.³ Indeed, Deuteronomy 29 indicates that YHWH allotted other gods to other nations. While the text prohibits Israel from worshipping the gods “whom they had not known,” the text does not question the foreigners’ worship of these gods (29:23–26 [Eng. 24–27]). Deut 4:19 reports that the astral bodies were allotted to the nations for worship, yet Israel is cautioned not to serve them, as the nations do. This text implies that just as Israel has YHWH, so the nations have the deities of the sun, moon, and stars, because YHWH made it so.⁴

Second Isaiah moves a step beyond the view of these earlier texts. Indeed, many have suggested that true monotheism first emerges in Second Isaiah’s rhetoric of YHWH’s universal dominion.⁵ Second Isaiah elevates YHWH to unparalleled heights

² Yehezkel Kaufmann, *History of the Religion of Israel: Volume IV, From the Babylonian Captivity to the End of Prophecy* (trans. C. W. Efroymson; New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1977) 18–29. For a critique of Kaufmann’s claims, see Jon Levenson, “Yehezkel Kaufmann and Mythology,” *Conservative Judaism* 36 (1982) 36–42.

³ Tigay affirms that throughout Deuteronomy, “it is no sin for other nations to worship idols and the heavenly bodies; it is considered sinful only when done by Israel, to whom God revealed Himself and forbade the worship of these objects” (Jeffrey H. Tigay, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Deuteronomy* (דברים) [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996] 435).

⁴ Patrick D. Miller, “‘God’s Other Stories’: On the Margins of Deuteronomic Theology,” in *Israelite Religion and Biblical Theology: Collected Essays* (ed. Patrick D. Miller; JSOTSup 267; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000) 593–602, at 595.

⁵ For example, Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel’s Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) 193.

and portrays Israel's God as no longer just the "God of gods." Now Second Isaiah understands YHWH not only as the sole God for Israel, but as the only existing deity. Deuteronomy and the Psalms branded the gods as worthless, insufficient, impotent, and vanities, yet even these terms, however derogatory, portray the gods as existent beings.⁶ Second Isaiah's language, on the other hand, denies any life to the foreign idols; they are merely images made by humans. Second Isaiah uses particularly significant vocabulary to describe the images of foreign gods, speaking of them only as objects, using such terms as פסל,⁷ עצב, and נסך. He describes the idols as nothing (הֵן־אַתֶּם מַאֲיִן, 41:24), merely empty works (אִפֶּס מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם, 41:29).⁸ As such, the author considers the idols not even worthy of comparison with YHWH (40: 18–19). They cannot be brought to task because they do not exist. Instead, their *crafters* are mocked and humiliated (41:7; 42:17; 44:9–20; 45:16). Those who trust in idols (פסל) and graven images (מַסְכָּה)⁹ will suffer shame (42:17). The ones who do not know lift up the wood of their idols (45:20), and the makers of idols (חֲרָשֵׁי צִירִים) will go in confusion (45:16).

The courtroom imagery within Second Isaiah further indicates the absence of other gods. It is as much the makers of idols who are put on trial as it is the idols themselves. In the first and third trial scenes (41:1–5; 43:8–13), YHWH calls together the nations, not the idols (41:1 and 43:9). YHWH summons the idols to court in 41: 21–23, but they do not answer YHWH's challenge. In their absence, he indicts those

⁶ See The Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32 in which the foreign gods are described as strange (זָרִים), abominations (תועבת), demons (שָׂדִים), gods Israel did not know (אֱלֹהִים לֹא יָדְעוּם), and worthless (הַבְלִיָּהִם) (Deut 32:16, 17, 21). In verse 21 YHWH proclaims: כַּעֲסוּנִי בַּהֲבִלֵיהֶם, which the NRSV translates "They provoked me with their idols." The noun הַבֵּל, however, means "vapor," "breath," or "vanity." It is a description of that which is evanescent or insubstantial. In fact, Abel's name (הַבֵּל, Gen 4:2) comes from this root. This implies that his character is not long-enduring, but surely it does not mean that he does not exist! Thus, this phrase could be translated "they provoked me with their *vanities*," which connotes the worthlessness of the gods without implying that they are merely images or idols (see *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation according to the Traditional Hebrew Text* [2d ed.; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1999]).

Psalm 96:4–5 extols YHWH's magnitude in comparison to other gods, "For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised; he is feared above all gods. For all of the gods of the peoples are worthless (אֱלִילִים), but the LORD made the heavens" (translation ours). Although the NRSV translates אֱלִילִים as "idols," the term simply means "worthless, insufficient" (Horst Dietrich Preuss, אֱלִיל, *elil*, TDOT 1: 285–87). Thus, this characteristic does not imply the nonexistence of the gods, but only their inferiority.

⁷ Deuteronomy also uses the term פַּסֵּל to refer to graven images. However, Deuteronomy's use of this term need not imply the nonexistence of other gods, as it does in Second Isaiah. In fact, in two instances the term is in construct as "idols of their gods" (פַּסְלֵי אֱלֹהֵיהֶם), which may indicate that the idols and the gods were not one and the same (Deut 7:25; 12:3).

⁸ אִפֶּס is never used to derogate foreign gods in Deuteronomy, however, this word is often used by Second Isaiah to indicate the sole existence of YHWH (Isa 45:6, 14; 46:9; 47:8, 10).

⁹ Exod 34:17 and Lev 19:4 prohibit the Israelites from making אֱלֹהֵי מַסְכָּה. Perhaps the fact that Second Isaiah does not use אֱלֹהִים in construct with מַסְכָּה heightens the lifeless nature of the image.

who worship idols. By comparison, Psalm 82 depicts the gods falling short of the divine standard of justice and thus paying the penalty for their faults.¹⁰

In no uncertain terms, Second Isaiah proclaims that YHWH is God and there is no other. The text does not allow for the existence of foreign deities, as do earlier texts such as Genesis, Deuteronomy, and Joshua. This development appears significant for the understanding of the nations' relationship to Israel and her God. Deuteronomy may show little concern for the welfare of the nations because the foreign nations have their own gods, whom YHWH allotted to them. However, as Second Isaiah asserts the nonexistence of the foreign deities, even the foreign nations will turn and recognize the ultimate sovereignty of Israel's God. With the futility of their own gods exposed, do foreigners now look to YHWH for salvation just as Israel does? Below we will argue that Second Isaiah himself is not primarily concerned with this question, his ultimate rhetorical aim being the exaltation of Israel's God. However, the means by which the prophet argues his case—that is, the denial of foreign deities—represents a development in the understanding of the divine economy which would inevitably raise the question of the status of foreigners. Later interpreters have wrestled with the implications of Second Isaiah's argument and continue to do so today.

■ Prophet of Universalism?

Though the precise dating, location, and authorship of the corpus known as Second Isaiah eludes scholars, the author appears to have composed the text sometime between the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.E. and the defeat of the Babylonian empire in 539 B.C.E., most likely sometime after the beginning of Cyrus's campaign in 550 B.C.E. Because some of Second Isaiah's audience might have believed that the destruction of the temple and the end of the Davidic dynasty represented the triumph of the Babylonian gods over Israel's God, Second Isaiah affirms that YHWH remains sovereign and calls upon his audience to abandon the worship of false gods.¹¹ Second Isaiah asserts that YHWH has dominion over the entire earth, and all nations will turn and recognize his sovereignty.

¹⁰ Admittedly, the gods do not speak in this trial either. However, the difference in the outcome is significant. The gods of Psalm 82 are found guilty and chastised, yet because the idols of Second Isaiah are not legitimate beings, they cannot be punished. Instead, the foolishness of those who follow idols is exposed. These individuals bear the guilt. Here the nonexistent gods cannot be deposed as they are in Psalm 82.

¹¹ Hollenberg suggests that many of the negative statements against the nations are actually addressed to "crypto-Israelites," those exiles who had assimilated to foreign ways (D. E. Hollenberg, "Nationalism and 'the Nations' in Isaiah XL–LV," *VT* 19 [1969] 23–36). He adds: "Second Isaiah is concerned not to convert Babylonians who have known only Bel Marduk [the Babylonian high god], but rather to win back Israelites or crypto-Israelites who have been attracted to Bel Marduk. So it may be that when Second Isaiah is challenging 'the nations,' he is really challenging Israelites within the nations" (Hollenberg, "Nationalism," 31).

The theme of turning to YHWH occurs frequently within Second Isaiah. Israel turns to YHWH to wait for salvation, but the nations also turn to YHWH in recognition of his reign. The nations' movement towards Israel's God, however, does not necessarily imply, as many commentators presume, that they will join in Israel's redemption.¹² In many cases, Israel's deliverance draws the nations' attention to YHWH, but the nations only serve as witnesses to God's glory within Israel (Isa 52:10).¹³ Turning to God, then, does not function as a metaphor for "conversion" or inclusion within Israel's salvation. Rather, it illumines the universal recognition and exaltation of Israel's God.¹⁴ The incomparability of YHWH remains the primary message of Second Isaiah. To substantiate this claim to the utmost, he proclaims that even the nations will recognize YHWH, but his interest in the nations ends here.

Second Isaiah uses the theme of YHWH's exaltation in order to motivate his exilic audience to return to Zion, and one should interpret his references to the nations in light of this. Chapter 40 opens with an image of the pilgrimage of Israelites back to Zion as YHWH promises to gather his flock (40:11). YHWH declares that Cyrus will "build my city and set my exiles free" (45:13). The text deals with the fulfillment of YHWH's covenant promises to his people Israel. As Second Isaiah invokes both memories of YHWH's past deliverance (51:9–10) and assurances of his continuing faithfulness and impending redemption (43:5–7), Israel's election remains the consistent theme.¹⁵ God has remained faithful to his chosen people throughout their history and will again deliver his nation from her present afflictions. God will redeem Israel not because of a universalism which encompasses all nations, but because of God's particular love for his people: "For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. . . . Because you are precious in my sight,

¹²For example, see H. Leene, "Universalism or Nationalism? Isaiah XLV 9–13 and Its Context," *Bijdragen: Tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie* 35 (1974) 309–34; Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66: A Commentary* (trans. David M. H. Stalker; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969) 101; and Begg who concludes that the prophet envisions the nations "entering fully and equally into the privileges of Israel" (Christopher Begg, "The Peoples and the Worship of Yahweh in the Book of Isaiah," in *Worship and the Hebrew Bible: Essays in Honour of John T. Willis* [ed. M. Patrick Graham et al; JSOTSup 284; Sheffield: Sheffield Press, 1999] 35–55, at 55).

¹³In commenting upon Isa 40:5, for example, StuhlmueLLer affirms that "all humankind are said to do no more than see and admire. Even enemies can recognize the brilliant qualities of the other side without joining it!" (Carroll StuhlmueLLer, "Self-Determination as a Biblical Theme: Prophetic Vision on Particularism Versus Universalism," in *Christian Spirituality in the United States: Independence and Interdependence* [ed. Francis Eigo and Silvio Fittipaldi; Villanova: Villanova University Press, 1978] 93–132, at 109).

¹⁴In surveying a number of verses which speak of the nations witnessing God's sovereignty, Gelston concludes that "the salvation envisaged here is that of Israel, and all that is claimed for the Gentiles in these passages is that they are to witness it and as a result to become convinced that YHWH is the only God." In fact, "in several of these passages the motif of the universal recognition of YHWH as the only God forms the climax of the oracle" (A. Gelston, "Universalism in Second Isaiah," *JTS* 43 [1992] 377–98, at 383).

¹⁵A persistent refrain, the root בָּחַר appears as a title of Jacob or Israel eight times in Second Isaiah.

and honored and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life" (43:3–4).

Further, YHWH's election of Israel now reveals the character of God, and his faithfulness to the covenant legitimizes his claim as the only God. Accordingly, Israel testifies to his unparalleled sovereignty: "You are my witnesses, says the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me" (43:10). Israel's very election, therefore, lends credence to Second Isaiah's message of hope to the exiles and of YHWH's exaltation. Second Isaiah's heightened universalism flows directly from his deepening of the notion of God's special election of Israel.

The theme of God's sovereignty finds its most imaginative expression in the prophet's poetic vision of the cosmic scope of YHWH's kingdom. For example, Second Isaiah proclaims that even the wild animals will bow to God's glory: "The wild animals will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches; for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people" (43:20). While the animals gain water from God's provision for Israel, clearly their honoring YHWH does not signify their joining Israel. Rather, it represents an example of his poetic license.¹⁶ Likewise, as we turn to a close reading of several difficult passages in Second Isaiah, we can assess whether Second Isaiah's treatment of the nations includes Gentiles among Israel or functions as the poetic vision of the universal sovereignty of YHWH.

Isaiah 42:1–9

The cryptic language of Isaiah 42:1–9 presents several challenges for the careful exegete.¹⁷ Who is the servant and what is his relationship to Israel and the nations? Does the servant represent an individual sent to Israel or the collective nation itself? These questions have consistently perplexed readers, and the significance of such phrases as *ברית עם* (covenant to the people) and *אור גוים* (light to the nations) remains highly disputed.

¹⁶ Hanson notes the prophet's use of the metaphor, reversing the chaotic image of prowling jackals and ostriches in Isaiah 34, to illustrate the radical "new thing" that God is doing, ultimately resulting in Israel praising God (Isa 43:21) (Paul Hanson, *Isaiah 40–66* [Interpretation; Louisville: John Knox, 1995] 75–76).

¹⁷ The connection between Isa 42:1–4, the "Servant Song," and verses 5–9 is disputed. Although Blenkinsopp does not find the language distinctive enough to attribute it to a different author (Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 19A; New York: Doubleday, 2002] 209), Westermann argues that verses 5–9 are a later addition to the servant song, noting that the description of the salvation to the nations is similar to that found in Third Isaiah (Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 101). Westermann finds explicit *salvation* of the nations here, but if one reads this text as Israel making known God's glory among the nations, it seems to fit more readily into the servant song and Second Isaiah as a whole. Yet even if verses 5–9 are a later addition, a highly speculative supposition, the two sections have been intentionally woven together. Thus, they will be considered together here.

עַם בְּרִית is surely one of the most obscure phrases in Second Isaiah. The Hebrew simply consists of two nouns, side by side, leaving later interpreters to make sense of the connection between the two. Commentators have proposed several possible translations—including “covenant of the people (Israel)”; “covenant of the people (nations)”; “splendor of the people”; and “covenant people”—yet no consensus has emerged. The translation of this phrase depends largely upon the supposed addressee. If YHWH speaks to a singular individual charged to carry out a mission to Israel, one may read the phrase as YHWH sending the servant as a covenant to the people (Israel).¹⁸ This interpretation seems most applicable to Second Isaiah’s exilic audience and most fitting in light of his interest in the restoration theme.

Whether the servant indicates an individual or Israel as a whole,¹⁹ many have found a universal missionary impulse within the servant’s task, reading the servant as a covenant to the peoples, even though עַם does not appear in the plural here.²⁰ Because עַם refers to all humankind in 42:5, some scholars reason that in 42:6, too, it must also refer to all people, not simply the people Israel. That the phrase stands in parallel to אֲוֵר גִּוִּים²¹ gives additional support to the idea of a covenant to the people of the nations.²² Yet the precise nature of the covenant remains unclear.

Despite various attempts to provide alternate translations,²³ one can best understand עַם בְּרִית within the context of Second Isaiah’s concern for the glorification of YHWH through Israel’s election. Chapter 42 affirms God’s role as creator of the cosmos (42:5) and uplifts his unique identity (42:8). Israel’s election bears witness to this image, and thus YHWH gives his servant as a “covenant people.”²⁴ Though

¹⁸ North believes that this is the most natural interpretation (Christopher R. North, *The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah: An Historical and Critical Study* [2d ed.; London: Oxford University Press, 1956] 132).

¹⁹ Hanson rightly notes that the prophet uses the servant as an eschatological dimension of his poetic metaphor, making definitive identification unnecessary (Hanson, *Isaiah* 40–66, 128).

²⁰ Clements, for example, concludes that “the nations are expected to participate in Israel’s salvation, not simply as onlookers and spectators, but directly as those who will enjoy its benefits” (Ronald E. Clements, “A Light to the Nations: A Central Theme of the Book of Isaiah,” in *Forming Prophetic Literature: Essays on Isaiah and the Twelve in Honor of John D. W. Watts* [ed. James W. Watts and Paul R. House; JSOTSup 235; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996] 57–69, at 68–69).

²¹ Omitted by some manuscripts of the LXX, the phrase לְאֹר גִּוִּים may be of questionable authenticity, as North finds (North, *Suffering Servant*, 131).

²² Hillers notes that although עַם is usually plural when parallel to גִּוִּים, there are instances in which the singular עַם is paired with the plural גִּוִּים clearly in reference to foreign nations (2 Sam 22:44; Ps 18:44; Isa 25:3) (Delbert R. Hillers, “Berit ‘am: ‘Emancipation of the People,”’ *JBL* 97 [1978] 175–82, at 181). Childs concurs that עַם, in parallel to גִּוִּים, is not a reference specifically to Israel (Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* [OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001] 326).

²³ H. Torczyner, “Presidential Address,” *JPOS* 16 (1936) 1–8; Hillers, “Berit ‘am,”’ 180; Mark S. Smith, “Berit ‘Am/Berit ‘Olam: A New Proposal for the Crux of Isa 42:6,” *JBL* 100 (1981) 241–43.

²⁴ Few commentators suggest this translation, although the NJPS renders עַם בְּרִית this way. In this sense, the servant is the collective nation of Israel, though the servant could also be an individual representative of the whole people as a “covenant people.” While “covenant people” would

this translation makes the English phrase no longer parallel with “light to the nations,” it effectively encapsulates Israel’s election with regard to the Gentiles. As a “covenant people,” Israel functions as a blessing—or a light—to the nations so that YHWH’s glory may be made known (see Gen 12:1–3). That YHWH gives Israel to the nations as a “covenant people” does not necessarily imply that the nations will become part of the elect. Rather, Israel may mediate blessing to the larger world and make foreign nations witnesses to YHWH’s glory. Thus, the translation fits within the context of Second Isaiah, which speaks of foreigners primarily in reference to the exiled Israelites, yet it emphasizes the role of YHWH’s chosen people in revealing his glory throughout the earth.

Isaiah 49

YHWH gives the servant a similar commission in chapter 49, yet determining the identity of the servant remains just as challenging. Here the voice clearly seems to belong to an individual. In Isa 49:3 the individual identifies himself as Israel, yet in 49:5 YHWH gives the servant a mission to Israel. This causes many to question if the title in 49:3 constitutes a later gloss since the servant could not both be Israel and have a mission to Israel. Scholars have put forth several possibilities for the identity of the servant as either a prophetic representative acting on behalf of Israel, an individual sent to Israel, or the remnant of Israel to whom YHWH has given a mission to reach out to Israel as a whole.

Yet the servant’s identity does not present the only mystery regarding this perplexing figure. YHWH again gives him *לְאֹר גוֹיִם* (49:6) and *לְבְרִית עַם* (49:8). This commission, particularly the reference to the *גוֹיִם* (nations), has caused many interpreters to assume that YHWH sent the servant to bring YHWH’s salvation to the world.²⁵ The slippery task of defining Second Isaiah’s concept of “salvation” becomes yet another problematic issue for the interpreter. Melugin, for example, maintains that YHWH intends to bring salvation to the nations, although he does note that kings will worship and bow down for YHWH’s sake. The larger theme of the nations’ recognition of YHWH through his redemption of Israel emerges here, as Melugin points out.²⁶ Yet does recognition equal salvation? In using these terms loosely and interchangeably, Melugin fails to determine the task of the servant and his relationship to the nations. After all, Second Isaiah does not explicitly state and may not have intended to imply the connection between the nations’ recognition of YHWH’s sovereignty and their salvation.

typically be rendered *עַם בְּרִית*, the inverse is grammatically possible (Gen 16:12; Prov 15:20, 21:20; Isa 9:5, as noted by North, *Suffering Servant*, 132).

²⁵ For example, Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*.

²⁶ Roy F. Melugin, “Israel and the Nations in Isaiah 40–55,” in *Problems in Biblical Theology: Essays in Honor of Rolf Knierim* (ed. Henry T. C. Sun and Keith L. Eades; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 249–64, at 257.

Those who favor a universalistic reading of the text and place great emphasis upon Isa 49:6 argue that YHWH has here given the servant a new commission, which reaches beyond his mission to Israel: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth." The song's opening imperatival address to the "coastlands" and the "peoples from afar" (49:1) causes these interpreters to read the entire section (49:1–6) as speaking of the foreign nations.²⁷ In contrast to a former mission to Israel, YHWH now sends the servant to proclaim YHWH's salvation that all people may turn to him and "be saved."

North takes this interpretation to the extreme and entirely excises Israel from the servant's mission. At times this even takes on a rather supersessionist tone:

The servant . . . must come to the recognition of his full task naturally, through frustration and disappointment in a lesser task, if need be. . . . The primary calling in the first Song, then, and the ultimate calling in the second, is to the heathen. The ministry to Israel is subsidiary, and, as it were, by the way.²⁸

Gelston, too, upholds that the servant's primary mission in this oracle is to the Gentiles: "Here there can be no question that the servant's mission to the Gentiles is a spiritual mission, and its goal, on the most natural interpretation, is the enlightenment of the nations by the revelation of YHWH to them, so that they may find in Him and in His Servant their salvation."²⁹

When removed from its immediate context, Isa 49:6 seems to indicate, albeit cryptically, that the servant has a larger mission to the nations. This interpretation, however, crumbles when one reads the verse within the context of Isaiah 49 and Second Isaiah as a whole. Aside from the puzzling verse 6, chapter 49 overwhelmingly concerns itself with the exilic Israelite community, not the foreign nations. In verse 8, YHWH assigns the servant the task of raising the land and apportioning the desolate inheritances, both of which draw to mind the nation of Israel and the restoration of Zion.

Further, the oracle of Isa 49:8–13 bears striking resemblance to the pilgrimage of the exiles in chapter 40, linking this text to the prominent restoration theme. In addition, the second half of the chapter shows a certain preoccupation with the restoration of Zion. The children of the exile will fill the desolate land until it becomes too crowded (49:20). Upon a signal from YHWH, the nations will return the exiles, prostrate themselves before the Israelites, and lick the dust from their feet

²⁷ Westermann goes so far as to claim that "everything it says has reference to the nations" (Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 207).

²⁸ North, *Suffering Servant*, 144.

²⁹ Gelston, "Universalism in Second Isaiah," 315. Authors of this *HTR* article have devocalized the Tetragrammaton here and in other quotations cited in this paper.

(49:22–23).³⁰ The section finishes with a strong pronouncement that God will make Israel's oppressors eat their own flesh and drink their own blood (49:26).

This context makes one wonder if Second Isaiah did proclaim as “universalistic” a message as many modern commentators conclude.³¹ In light of the historical situation of Second Isaiah's audience, it seems more probable that the author primarily intended this text to uplift the exilic community and to encourage those who had assimilated to return to the fold. Thus, YHWH may have sent the servant to restore the exiles from all corners of the earth. In this sense, the servant becomes a light to the exiles in foreign nations, calling them back to YHWH and ensuring that YHWH's salvation would reach to every exile “until the end of the earth.” Such language invoking the “ends of the earth” and the “peoples from afar” may represent yet another example of the universal scope of the prophet's poetic vision.³² Still, the cryptic phrase נקל מהיותך לי עבד (Isa 49:6) suggests that YHWH has given the servant a mission beyond restoring the tribes of Jacob which includes the nations in some capacity.

Given the thrust of the chapter, it seems more likely that the servant's new task relates to the glorification of YHWH, not to the inclusion of the Gentiles. Childs notes that the verb קלל (*Niphal*: to appear trifling) is the antonym of כבד (*Niphal*: to be glorified), which appears in 49:5. Thus, in contrasting the two verbs, Second Isaiah points to the climax of the servant's calling to serve “the God of all creation.”³³ Though Childs does not fully explain the function of לאור גוים, his observation suggests that the servant's light to the nations shines, so that “all flesh may know

³⁰ Naidoff notes that the nations bow down to Zion, not to YHWH, at the end of Isaiah 49 (see Isa 45:14). Further, he asserts that because the kings give no confession to YHWH, Zion is the object of their pilgrimage (Bruce Naidoff, “Israel and the Nations in Deutero-Isaiah: The Political Terminology in Form-Critical Perspective” [Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 1980] 74).

³¹ Even those who acknowledge the exilic context view Isa 49:6 as a turning point in which Second Isaiah includes the Gentiles. Stuhlmüller argues that Second Isaiah focused on the salvation of Israel in chapters 41–48 and 49–55, “yet he was speaking/writing in such a way as to be ready at any moment to turn to the gentiles,” (Carroll Stuhlmüller, “Deutero-Isaiah: Major Transitions in the Prophet's Theology and in Contemporary Scholarship,” *CBQ* 42 [1980] 1–29, at 28). Though he maintains that the expression ברית עם is restricted to a day of salvation for Israel, Stuhlmüller asserts that in 49:6, “in a sudden burst of mighty zeal, freed from the frustrating shackles upon ministry,” Second Isaiah includes the Gentiles as beneficiaries of YHWH's salvation (Stuhlmüller, “Deutero-Isaiah,” 26–27). Here it seems that Stuhlmüller, rather than Second Isaiah, is frustrated with the Israelite focus of these oracles.

³² De Boer argues that such phrases as “ends of the earth,” “coastlands,” and “peoples from afar” refer to the totality of YHWH's sovereignty, much like the descriptions of his rule over the heavens and the earth. Therefore, these terms do not have implications for universal salvation. He further notes elsewhere that foreign nations are mentioned only as people to be conquered, giving no indication that Second Isaiah favored their redemption (P. A. H. de Boer, *Second Isaiah's Message*, [Leiden: Brill, 1956] 89–90).

³³ Childs, *Isaiah*, 385. He adds: “Commentators have usually argued that, lest the task of restoring Israel seem too small a task for the servant, God expands his mission to include the nations. However, nowhere in Second Isaiah is the restoration of Israel set in competition with the salvation of the nations” (Childs, *Isaiah*, 385).

that I am the LORD *your* Savior, and *your* Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob" (49:26).³⁴ Indeed, Second Isaiah specifically names the servant Israel as the one in whom YHWH will glorify himself (*Hithpa'el*) (49:3b). In order for YHWH to glorify himself, all nations must recognize his sovereignty. However, this does not necessarily imply that all nations will receive his salvation.

Isaiah 44

This one will say "I am the LORD's," another will be called by the name of Jacob, yet another will write on his hand, "the LORD's," and adopt the name of Israel. (44:5)

Gelston has hailed this verse as an affirmation of universalism, indicating that "individuals who are not Israelites by birth will become adherents of YHWH . . . and will also seek in some sense to belong to Israel as the people of YHWH."³⁵ When read within its context, however, this sense of universalism disappears, and the entire chapter again affirms Second Isaiah's dual themes of Israel's election and YHWH's uniqueness. Israel's election is emphasized in Isa 44:1–3; the oracle is addressed to "Jacob, my servant" and "Israel whom I have chosen."³⁶ These titles are repeated in 44:2 as YHWH identifies himself as the one who made, formed, and helps Israel. In 44:3, YHWH promises to pour his spirit upon Israel's seed and her offspring. Israel's descendants, therefore, are the subject of 44:5. Although the cryptic text of verse 5 refers only to "this one" and "that one," there is no indication that the subject changes from the offspring of Israel to foreigners between 44:1–4 and 5. Rather, YHWH promises that Israel's identity as the chosen, the ones belonging to the LORD, will live on in the next generation despite their present dispersion among the nations.

Some understand the actions of "this one" and "that one" as practices indicating a foreigner's conversion or attachment to Israel,³⁷ but they may also imply an act of Israel's children reaffirming their identity.³⁸ That "this one will say 'I am the

³⁴ Emphasis added. Note that this verse identifies YHWH as the savior of Israel, not the savior of "all flesh."

³⁵ Gelston, "Universalism in Second Isaiah," 386.

³⁶ Stuhlmueller affirms the emphasis on Israel's election, claiming that even if Gentile conversion is implied in these verses, it seems to apply only to scattered individuals (Stuhlmueller, "Self-Determination," 116).

³⁷ Blenkinsopp contends that these four types can "only be understood as proselytes." In fact, the Targum identifies the first as God-fearers (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 233).

³⁸ Watts believes that this verse refers solely to the response of diaspora Jews to God's impending action. The new life promised in verses 3–4, he states, will result in "new enthusiasm among Israelites in Babylon and elsewhere to *belong to YHWH* and to use the name *Jacob*. The exilic process of assimilation had naturally led Jews to suppress their distinct identity, to hide behind Babylonian names and to deny their religious identity" (John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34–66* [WBC; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987] 144–45). See also D. W. Van Winkle, "Proselytes in Isaiah XLIV 1–5," *VT* 47 (July 1997) 341–59, who reaches a similar conclusion. One can find a modern sociological parallel

LORD's' and that one will be called by the name of Jacob" echoes YHWH's earlier pronouncement to Jacob: "I have called you by your name, you are mine" (43:1). To write on one's hand לִיהוָה "the LORD's" indicates ownership, as in the case of slaves or property.³⁹

The final phrase in Isa 44:5 has sparked the most discussion regarding the attachment of foreigners. Some translate: "this one will *adopt* the name of Israel,"⁴⁰ which implies choosing a name for oneself though not given it by birth. The *Piel* of כָּנָה, however, simply means "to give a name of honor."⁴¹ Even this, then, constitutes an assertion of Israel's election, denoting the name of honor, which her descendants will inherit, and does not necessarily imply one adopting a foreign name. Second Isaiah affirms Israel's election again in 44:6, making it even more unlikely that 44:5, sandwiched between proclamations of Jacob's chosenness, refers to Gentiles.

As the children of Israel avow themselves to the sovereign God who acts on their behalf, those who worship idols will see the folly of their practice. The author contrasts the idols' witnesses with those of Israel, God's witnesses (44:8–9). Those who make idols "neither see nor know," for "who would fashion a god or cast an image that can do no good?" (44:9–10). Their gods exposed as mere cast images, idol makers will "be terrified and put to shame together" (44:11). Though Second Isaiah does not mention YHWH by name in this discourse, he makes the point clearly that one cannot compare YHWH with such empty images. YHWH is God, and there is no other.

The last part of the chapter again declares Israel's election.⁴² Second Isaiah calls the heavens and the depths of the earth, even the trees, to proclaim that the LORD has redeemed Jacob (44:23). Those who point to these images as indicative of Second Isaiah's universalism should note that he calls the heavens specifically to proclaim that YHWH has redeemed *Jacob* and that YHWH will glorify himself in *Israel*. All will recognize YHWH's sovereignty, yet this does not imply that he will include

among younger American Jews who are willing to assert their Judaism in much more public ways than their parents, who sought to assimilate into the American mainstream.

³⁹ For example, jar handles were imprinted לַמֶּלֶךְ *lammelek*, "the king's" (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 40–55, 234). In the ancient world, a master's name was often cut on his slave's hand (Westermann, *Isaiah* 40–66, 137). Van Winkle finds unpersuasive arguments that Gentile proselytes write the name of the LORD on their hands. He notes that many Jews worshipped foreign gods or felt estranged from YHWH and their community during the Babylonian exile. These Jews and the offspring of mixed marriages, he asserts, are the ones who reclaim the name of the LORD (D. W. Van Winkle, "Isaiah LVI 1–8," *SBLSP* 36 [1997] 234–52, at 242).

⁴⁰ For example, NJPS and Childs (*Isaiah*, 338).

⁴¹ Ringgren argues that in Isa 44:5, the term describes "those who embrace Yahwism," noting "it is an honor for them to belong to God's people and their God, and 'Israel' is a name of honor" (Helmer Ringgren, "כָּנָה, *knh*," *TDOT* 7:196). Yet this could just as easily be said of the children of exiled Israelites who embrace their identity and resist assimilation.

⁴² Many commentators read Isa 44:21–23 as the original ending of the discourse of 44:6–8 and the interceding verses as an interpolation (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 40–55, 235; Westermann, *Isaiah* 40–66, 138).

all in Israel's redemption. Second Isaiah remains focused upon the exiles, as the chapter concludes with the restoration theme. YHWH promises that Jerusalem will be inhabited and the cities of Judah will be rebuilt (44:26).

Isaiah 45

Second Isaiah's proclamation of the universal sovereignty of Israel's God comes to full fruition in chapter 45. YHWH acts through Cyrus so that "they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting that there is no one besides me, I am the LORD and there is no other" (45:6). The climax of divine intervention occurs with the universal recognition of YHWH. Even God's very choosing of the Persian Cyrus as the agent of Israel's redemption illumines YHWH's reign over the entire world. This role, in the words of Blenkinsopp, appears "so extraordinary that it requires a repeated emphasis that the one assigning the role is a cosmic rather than a merely national, ethnic, or locative deity."⁴³ Second Isaiah identifies YHWH, the one who formed Israel, as the God who creates both light and darkness and the one who makes well-being and evil (45:7). Indeed, no one can question his actions (45:9–11).⁴⁴

Divine self-predication completes the assertion of YHWH's sovereignty, identifies YHWH's authenticity, and denies the existence of other deities.⁴⁵ Second Isaiah repeats both the refrain **אֲנִי יְהוָה** (I am YHWH)⁴⁶ and the explicit denial of other gods⁴⁷ nine times within the chapter. Blenkinsopp notes the close ties between Second Isaiah's language, the ancient Near Eastern *akitu* liturgy, and the *Enuma Elish*. He argues that Second Isaiah deliberately mirrors the image of divine kingship asserting that YHWH, not Marduk, is the universal king. In fact, the phrase "I am and there is no other" markedly resembles the praise of Marduk as without equal among the gods in the *Enuma Elish*.⁴⁸ Thus, its inclusion here signifies yet again the universal sovereignty of YHWH.

In Second Isaiah's view, the proclamation of YHWH's universal reign causes all to turn and to acknowledge God's sovereignty. Even the nations proclaim, "Surely

⁴³ Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 252.

⁴⁴ Westermann highlights the great stress placed upon God as creator (45:7, 12, 18). Note the forceful Hebrew phrase at the end of 18a, **הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים** (he is the God) (Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 172). See Nathan MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of "Monotheism"* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2003) 78–81 for the significance of this phrase in Deuteronomy.

⁴⁵ Phillips defines the self-predication formula as consisting of the first person pronoun plus a proper noun or another pronoun, which may be the divine name or an adjective for the deity. This formula may be expanded by additional adjectives or verbs, which describe the god in question (Morgan L. Phillips, "Divine Self-Predication in Deutero-Isaiah," *Biblical Research* 16 [1971] 32–51, at 32).

⁴⁶ Isa 45:3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 18, 19, 21, 22.

⁴⁷ Isa 45:5 (twice), 6 (twice), 14, 18, 21 (twice), 22. The most common phrase is **וְאֵין עֹד**, although other phrases are also used, including **אֵין אֱלֹהִים** and **אֵפֶס אֱלֹהִים**.

⁴⁸ *Enuma Elish* 7: 14, 88. Blenkinsopp adds: "If Second Isaiah is generally given credit for the first clear statement of monotheistic faith, it may be on account of formulations generated by the polemic of the kind we are discussing" (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 108).

God is with you and there is no other!" (45:14). Some commentators argue that this proclamation constitutes a confession of faith, a conversion, on the part of the nations.⁴⁹ However, despite the fact that the nations acknowledge the authority of Israel's God, the fact remains that they bow to Israel in obeisance and follow her in chains: "The wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Ethiopia, and the Sabeans, tall of stature, shall come over to you and be yours, they shall follow you; they shall come over in chains and bow down to you" (45:14).⁵⁰ The contrast between their captivity and Israel's liberation appears to spark the nations' confession, rather than the desire for voluntary conversion.⁵¹ Further, the nations never call upon the divine name,⁵² which suggests that they do not profess adherence to YHWH, as such, but only recognize that the sovereign God lives among the people of Israel. Their acknowledgement need go no further than to recognize that YHWH functions as *Israel's* savior (45:17).⁵³

After another assertion of YHWH's unparalleled identity as true God and savior (Isa 45:21), God implores the ends of the earth to "turn to me and be saved!" This proclamation constitutes the strongest indication yet of the universal conversion of the nations, however, the addressee of this exclamation remains disputed. Many commentators who believe that the phrase "survivors of the nations" in 45:20 refers to foreigners likewise conclude that the parallel phrase "ends of the earth" refers to the nations.⁵⁴ Yet because "survivors of the nations" seems like a more fitting description of exiles,⁵⁵ "the ends of the earth" may also refer to exiles in the ends

⁴⁹ Because YHWH is confessed to be the only god, Blenkinsopp believes that the confessional statement describes a conversion, even if a forced conversion. He does note, however, that though the foreigners profess that Israel's God is the only god, there is no indication of their becoming proselytes or being obligated to observe sabbath or abide by purity laws (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 40–55, 258).

⁵⁰ Westermann, who believes that the nations do experience conversion, admits that he cannot explain this verse in its context. He prefers to read it as a misplaced fragment connected to Isaiah 60 (Westermann, *Isaiah* 40–66, 169–70).

⁵¹ Leene, "Universalism," 327.

⁵² Note Isa 45:14d: אֵל וְאֵין עֹד אִפְסֵי אֱלֹהִים "Surely God (ʾĒl) is with you [alone], and there is no other; there is no [other] god (ʾĕlōhîm)."

⁵³ "That those who express this would also share in this liberation themselves," Leene argues, "seems to us an unwarranted conclusion" (Leene, "Universalism," 327).

⁵⁴ For example, W. A. M. Beuken, "The Confession of God's Exclusivity of All Mankind: A Reappraisal of Is 45, 18–25," *Bijdragen: Tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie* 35 (1974) 335–56, at 342. He cites Ps 2:8, 22:28, 59:14 [Eng. 59:13] 72:8.

⁵⁵ Hollenberg interprets the phrase to mean Israelites in exile, noting that the root פִּלַּט is used for surviving or escaping a crisis with the idea of fleeing as a fugitive (Hollenberg, "Nationalism," 31). This interpretation seems to make the most sense in the context of Second Isaiah's general exilic audience. Martin-Achard agrees, arguing that "the survivors of the nations . . . are the exiles who are dispersed throughout Mesopotamia (v. 20); they are letting themselves be seduced by the cults of the heathen though there is only one God who can help them (v. 21)" (*Light to the Nations*, 17). Although Beuken argues that the address to the idolaters does not make sense unless the survivors are foreigners (Beuken, "Confession," 342), the change in voice from second person to third person in Isa 45:20b would seem to permit the idolaters to be different than the survivors.

of the earth, but not necessarily to the nations, themselves. Furthermore, Second Isaiah may use this language simply for rhetorical emphasis. Many of the enthronement psalms, for example, implore the entire earth to sing to the LORD, yet one can hardly argue on this basis alone that they imply universal conversion.⁵⁶

Nevertheless, even if this language refers to the nations at large, the image illustrates YHWH's sovereignty, not conversion of the nations. Blenkinsopp notes that in the only other occurrence of אֶפְסֵי-אָרֶץ (ends of the earth) in Second Isaiah (52:10), the inhabitants of the earth only *observe* YHWH's deliverance of his people. Accordingly, he reasons, "the universalism in question is therefore the claim of universal jurisdiction and dominion advanced on behalf of YHWH and based on his creation of the world and direction of the course of history."⁵⁷ Even the declaration "To me every knee will bow and every tongue will swear" (45:23) is an act of obeisance and submission which affirms God's sovereignty and Israel's election.⁵⁸ YHWH's proclamation signifies that all nations will acknowledge his exclusivity; whether this results in salvation or humiliation remains to be determined.⁵⁹

The final two verses of chapter 45 mark the parallel movement of Israel and her opponents. Both Israel and the other, "all who are incensed against him" (Isa 45:24), turn to the LORD. While the children of Israel "triumph and glory," however, the nations become ashamed (45:24–25). The text gives little warrant to assume that turning to Israel and confessing the sovereignty of Israel's God implies conversion on the part of the nations. Indeed, it is quite possible to turn to Israel's God and be humiliated.

Some scholars argue that all those who profess faith in YHWH are included, regardless of their nationality, among the "seed of Israel." Beuken, for example, finds a significant difference between the "seed of Jacob" (45:19) and the "seed of Israel" (45:25).⁶⁰ Even if some later readers came to understand the text in this

⁵⁶ For example, Ps 96:1, 3: "O sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD all the earth . . . Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples." Weiser states that there can "hardly be any question here of missionary activity in the strict sense" (Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary* [OTL; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962] 629).

⁵⁷ Blenkinsopp does entertain the idea that the Gentiles are invited to accept YHWH's salvation, but he notes that—willingly or not—they will submit to God's dominion (45:23b) (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 262).

⁵⁸ In an earlier article somewhat in tension with his position in the previous note, Blenkinsopp argues that these verses signal the conversion of the nations, claiming that the confession of faith and bending of the knee "imply abandonment of the worship of other gods and therefore a more radical reorientation of one's religious life" (Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Second Isaiah—Prophet of Universalism," in *The Prophets* [ed. Philip R. Davies; The Biblical Seminar 42; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996] 186–206, at 192). While 45:23 may be addressed to the nations, 45:24–25 (discussed immediately below) clearly speak of the submission rather than the conversion of the nations.

⁵⁹ Beuken affirms: "The confession of God's power is the last word of all mankind. How that confession is intended to be salvific but can turn out to be punitive, constitutes a secondary objective of the prophet in this particular context" (Beuken, "Confession," 335).

⁶⁰ Beuken, "Confession," 349.

way, it does not necessarily follow that the author of Second Isaiah, himself, envisioned such implications. The text's primary concern remains the exaltation of the universal sovereignty of YHWH. Accordingly, even the foreign nations will turn and acknowledge that God lives among Israel. The subsequent salvation of the nations, however, does not follow as an inevitable conclusion of this realization. As Second Isaiah demonstrates the futility of their idols, so he explicitly contrasts the shameful action of the nations with that of vindicated Israel.

All of them are put to shame and confounded, the makers of idols go in confusion together. But Israel is saved by the LORD with everlasting salvation; you shall not be put to shame or confounded to all eternity. (Isa 45:16–17)

Closer examination of these cryptic texts in Second Isaiah has revealed that the author invokes the nations as part of the universal glorification of Israel's God. Second Isaiah raises the bar in asserting YHWH's sovereignty. He represents YHWH as the only God, and the gods of the nations as not only worthless, but as mere cast images which have no divinity. If YHWH is truly to be recognized as the greatest and only God, all the nations must turn and acknowledge his sovereignty. This does not require, however, that YHWH redeem them alongside Israel. Israel's restoration will cause the nations to recognize YHWH's acting on behalf of his chosen people, yet this very recognition often leads to their shame.

Though Second Isaiah does not demonstrate an interest in the Gentile nations other than as witnesses to YHWH's sovereignty, the prophet's words often defy clear interpretation. Further, Second Isaiah's argument for the nonexistence of foreign gods inevitably carries implications for the nations, a point which itself may have sparked reinterpretations of the oracles of Second Isaiah. Second Isaiah's enigmatic language in combination with a growing openness to foreigners among some Judeans during the postexilic period eventually produced new understandings of both the Isaianic text and the role of the Gentile nations in the eschaton. In fact, one can already glimpse this trend within parts of the collection known as Third Isaiah.

■ Third Isaiah: The Continuing Tradition

Scholars generally regard chapters 60–62 as the oldest, core section of Third Isaiah⁶¹ and the oracles of 56:1–8 and 66:18–24 as the framework of a final redaction.⁶² The latest sections posit a much more inclusive view of foreigners and proselytes, but the oldest parts of Third Isaiah maintain a strong affinity with Second Isaiah. Thus, one can see a development of themes within the collection itself. Before turning to the inclusion of foreigners in chapters 56 and 66, we shall examine the earlier material in Third Isaiah.

⁶¹ Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 296.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 305.

As in Second Isaiah, in Isaiah 60–62 God centers his redeeming action in Zion: “For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch” (Isa 62:1). The emphasis is not on God’s universal salvific action, but on his particular concern for Israel in order that, through her restoration, YHWH might be glorified. Third Isaiah lists the nations as among the witnesses of Zion’s restoration (60:3; 61:9, 11; 62:2). However, as in Second Isaiah, the author does not include them in Israel’s salvation. In fact, the nations remain quite clearly subservient to Israel. The nations will facilitate the repatriation of the exiles, carrying Israel’s sons and daughters (Isa 60:4), which sounds much like the description of the ingathering in chapter 49. Both chapter 49 and chapter 62 speak of YHWH lifting up a signal to the nations to restore the exiles (49:22; 62:10).

Not only will the nations return the children of Israel to Zion, but their wealth will flow to Israel. She will “suck the milk of nations . . . and the breasts of kings” (Isa 60:16). The foreigners will serve Israel and rebuild Zion (60:10–11; 61:5). God will seek retribution on behalf of Israel, and the children of those who oppressed Israel will come to bow down to her (60:14). The kingdoms who refuse to serve Israel will be destroyed (60:12). Bearing much similarity to the oracles of Second Isaiah (for example, 45:14; 49:23, 26), this vision can hardly serve as a picture of universal salvation for the Gentile nations.

All of this will happen in order to glorify Israel and her God (Isa 60:21). The light of Zion will draw the nations (60:1–3), and, as a result, they will acknowledge the privileged status of Israel and the power of her God; for “the Lord YHWH will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations” (61:11). The nations will know that YHWH blessed the seed of Israel (61:9). As in Second Isaiah, the nations will perceive Israel’s God as sovereign as they witness Israel’s chosenness. An interest in proclaiming the universal sovereignty of YHWH, not the salvation of the nations, explains the foreigners’ place in the text.

Though the oracles of Third Isaiah echo Second Isaiah in important ways, these texts also reinterpret Second Isaian themes. Whereas the Servant constitutes a major theme in Second Isaiah, the *servants* of YHWH become a central concern in Third Isaiah.⁶³ Indeed, the identity of YHWH’s servants becomes a crucial issue by signaling a changing definition of the people of God as displayed most prominently in Isaiah 65.⁶⁴ God recognizes as his people only those who seek him, but he rebukes those

⁶³ Aside from 54:17, all references to the servant in Second Isaiah are singular. The first reference to the servants (plural) occurs in 54:17, anticipating what will follow in Third Isaiah (W. A. M. Beuken, “The Main Theme of Trito-Isaiah: ‘The Servants of YHWH,’” *JSOT* 47 [1990] 67–87, at 67–68).

⁶⁴ Though the servants are not mentioned by name in Isa 56:9–63:6, Beuken believes that the concept is in the background, nonetheless. He thinks that the contrast between the righteous and the godless which develops in these chapters animates the identity of the righteous servants (Beuken, “Main Theme,” 69).

who forsake him (Isa 65:10–12).⁶⁵ This development results from a heightened eschatological dualism and a growing interest in the righteous remnant. The opposition between the servants and the opponents builds to a climax in chapter 65:

Therefore thus says the Lord YHWH:
 My servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry;
 My servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty;
 My servants shall rejoice, but you shall be put to shame;
 My servants shall sing for gladness of heart, but you shall cry out for pain
 of heart, and shall wail for anguish of spirit.
 You shall leave your name to my chosen to use as a curse, and the Lord
 YHWH will put you to death;
 But to his servants he will give a different name. (Isa 65:13–15)

The same dichotomous language that Second Isaiah applied to Israel and the nations now describes the righteous remnant and its opponents.⁶⁶ In Isaiah 49, for example, the exiles who return will not hunger or thirst (49:10). YHWH will put the foreign nations to shame when they witness God's glory (45:16). In this eschatological oracle, however, God will make distinctions within Israel itself between those who will not hunger or thirst and those who will suffer shame.

The latest editorial layer and framework of the collection, Isa 56:1–8 and 66:18–24, displays a new openness to foreigners who attach themselves to YHWH.⁶⁷ In this sense, these chapters also offer a commentary on previous material and preserve central themes while pushing into new theological territory.

Isaiah 56 indicates that God will welcome in his house, which will become a “house of prayer for all peoples,” eunuchs and foreigners (בְּנֵי הַנֶּכֶר) who join themselves to YHWH (Isa 56:6–7).⁶⁸ Given the earlier oracles, this new focus upon eunuchs and foreigners—and the strikingly different attitude towards the other which it represents—may indicate the first surprising element of this text. For, as

⁶⁵ Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19B; New York: Doubleday, 2003) 34.

⁶⁶ For a close analysis of the distinction between the righteous and the apostates within the cultic community and the symbolic language used in this oracle, see Paul Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975) 134–61.

⁶⁷ Van Winkle, in fact, argues that Isa 56:1–8 deliberately seeks to offset the nationalism of chapters 60–62. He notes the contrast between Isa 62:8, in which enemies and foreigners will not have food or drink, and Isa 56:7, in which God will make the foreigners joyful in his house of prayer (Van Winkle, “Isaiah LVI 1–8,” 244).

⁶⁸ בְּנֵי הַנֶּכֶר can refer to one who is not a member of a household (Gen 17:12, 27) or, more often, a non-Israelite (e.g., 2 Sam 15:19; 22:45–46) (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 136). Greenberg argues that a distinction should be made between those who “joined themselves to the Jews” (Esth 9:27; Isa 14:1; Dan 11:34), a socio-ethnic group who attached themselves to a community, and those who “joined themselves to the LORD,” foreigners who experienced a “conversion to the God of Israel” (Moshe Greenberg, “A House of Prayer for All Peoples,” in *Jerusalem: A House of Prayer for All Peoples in Three Monotheistic Religions, Proceedings of a Symposium Held in Jerusalem, February 17–18, 1998* [ed. Alviero Niccacci; Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Analecta 52; Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 2001] 31–37, at 32–33).

Blenkinsopp states, "the foreigners of 56:1–8 are quite different from those who will be put to work at menial tasks in the imagined Jewish commonwealth of the future (60:10; 61:5), a fortiori, from the foreigners who occupy the country and live off it (62:8)." ⁶⁹ Indeed, by comparison, this text gives some eunuchs and foreigners a positive place in the eschaton.

To the eunuchs who hold fast to the covenant and worry that their lack of progeny may result in exclusion, YHWH will give "a monument and a name (יָד וְשֵׁם) that shall not be cut off" (Isa 56:5). While the precise meaning of this phrase remains unclear, it may denote membership in the Jerusalem cult community. ⁷⁰ Similarly, YHWH offers to gather those foreigners who hold fast to the covenant. The fact that he will accept their sacrifices and burnt offerings (Isa 56:7) suggests that the foreigners may even become priests of YHWH. ⁷¹ In fact, Westermann argues that these foreigners will thus become full members of the community and lose their identity as foreigners. ⁷²

The fact that some eunuchs and foreigners, traditionally excluded from the community, will gain membership indicates a changing definition of communal identity. Third Isaiah places emphasis here not on lineage but on Sabbath observance, on choosing what pleases God, on loving YHWH's name, ⁷³ and on holding fast to the covenant (Isa 56:4, 6). Westermann argues that the emphasis on Sabbath observance signals a shift from a national or ethnic community to a religious community. Adherence to YHWH becomes a matter of personal decision, as reflected chiefly in Sabbath observance, not a question of birth. ⁷⁴ Westermann proclaims that the stipulations for the eunuch and the foreigner "make it perfectly plain that membership of the

⁶⁹ Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 56–66, 137.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 139. Cf. D. W. Van Winkle, "The Meaning of *Yād Wāšēm* in Isaiah LVI 5," *VT* 47 (1997) 378–85.

⁷¹ Blenkinsopp argues that the author considers the foreigners eligible for priestly office. He notes that though the verb שָׁרָה, "to minister," (v. 6) can refer to secular service, by the time of this text a minister (מְשָׁרֵת) was a priest (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 56–66, 140). Van Winkle, on the other hand, doubts that the foreigners are literally priests of YHWH. He notes that in Isa 61:5–6, the Israelites are *metaphorical* priests and ministers of YHWH for the nations, yet this is meant simply to demonstrate that the nations are subservient to Israel as the laity is subservient to priests. Isaiah 56, he argues, does not democratize the priesthood any more than chapter 61. Van Winkle asserts that the use of שָׁרָה in chapter 56 indicates a disagreement between the authors of chapters 56 and 61 about the relationship of the nations to YHWH and Israel (Van Winkle, "Isaiah LVI 1–8," 241). Incidentally, 1QIsa^a omits לְשָׁרָתוֹ completely, reading instead: "to be his servants, and to bless the name of the LORD." Wells suggests that such language was excluded because the idea that Gentiles would be priests of YHWH was offensive (Roy D. Wells, "Isaiah as an Exponent of Torah: Isaiah 56:1–8," in *New Visions of Isaiah* [ed. Roy F. Melugin and Marvin A. Sweeney; JSOTSup 214; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996] 140–55, at 148). Whether or not the Gentiles should literally be considered priests of YHWH, it is significant that this language is applied to foreigners here.

⁷² Westermann, *Isaiah* 40–66, 35.

⁷³ Van Winkle notes that though Israelites are often described as loving YHWH or YHWH's name (Ps 5:12; 69:37; 119:132), this is the only instance in which Gentiles love God's name ("Isaiah LVI 1–8," 241).

⁷⁴ Westermann, *Isaiah* 40–66, 310.

community which worships YHWH is now based upon resolve, a free affirmation of this God and of his worship. No longer is it thought of in national but in individual terms. The chosen people has turned into the confessing community.”⁷⁵

Westermann may go too far, for the inclusion of some foreigners and eunuchs does not provide grounds to assume that the community no longer defines itself on national terms.⁷⁶ Schramm emphasizes that Isa 56:3–8 addresses only those foreigners who have attached themselves to YHWH and “has no intention of granting membership in the community and participation in the temple cultus to foreigners in general.”⁷⁷ Schramm correctly cautions that one must distinguish between an openness to proselytes and the “modern theological concept of ‘universalism.’”⁷⁸ While the text opens membership to some whom it had previously excluded, it articulates in new ways the meaning of the “old chosen people.”⁷⁹ This concept may spring from the idea of a righteous remnant or the faithful group, which claims a deeper expression of “true Israel.” Thus, though it defines the group in significant new ways, the text pictures a community which is more like the chosen people should be, not less so.

The task to function as YHWH’s servants may indicate the manner of inclusion of foreigners among the righteous remnant (Isa 56:6). As discussed above, the remnant theme throughout Third Isaiah links to the identity of the servants. In contrast to those who turn from YHWH, the servants constitute the faithful of Israel, whom God will favor (Isa 65:9). The author of Isaiah 56 employs this language of servanthood to include foreigners who have joined themselves to YHWH as part of the faithful remnant group. Van Winkle goes so far as to say that “by identifying foreigners as God’s servants, the author [of Isa 56:1–8] does away with the privileged position of Israel.”⁸⁰ Van Winkle, however, misunderstands the centrality of election to the remnant theme. Israel does not lose its privilege, but it becomes restricted to a more select group. Isaiah 56 significantly includes some Gentiles within this privileged group, but the inclusion of foreigners in no way erases the privileged position of faithful Israel. Rather, it heightens the notion of election by limiting it to only those Judeans and certain select Gentiles who perform as rigorous YHWHists.

No doubt playing off of the prevalent theme of the ingathering of exiles, Isa 56:8 promises that God will gather others besides those already gathered, but the meaning of this verse remains unclear. YHWH may gather adherents beyond Israel

⁷⁵ Ibid., 313.

⁷⁶ Blenkinsopp also believes that the beginning of defining the community by confessional status is indicated here, however he cautions that, at this point, it is still a question of determining the civil status of those who live in the land (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 136).

⁷⁷ Brooks Schramm, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah: Reconstructing the Cultic History of the Restoration* (JSOTSup 193; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 122.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Westermann calls the new form of association “no longer identical with the old concept of the chosen people” (Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 314).

⁸⁰ Van Winkle, “Isaiah LVI 1–8,” 242.

among the nations.⁸¹ The gathering may persist beyond the present time as a continuous process, or those already gathered may serve as the means by which to gather others, whether among the dispersed Israelites or among the nations. Despite the ambiguity, one might reasonably suppose that the righteous remnant will include additional members in the final consummation. Though by no means a signal of universal salvation, the inclusion of eunuchs and foreigners reveals that Isaiah 56 may include some Gentiles among those chosen.

Isaiah 66 displays a similar openness to Gentile inclusion. The oracle in Isa 66:18–23 incorporates themes from First, Second, and Third Isaiah in one eschatological vision, which includes the gathering of the nations, the witness of God's glory, and the returning of the diaspora to God's holy mountain.⁸² Like Isa 56:1–8, the vision of the end time in Isa 66:18–23 shows greater interest in foreigners and an openness to proselytes than does the earlier material.

In many respects this oracle represents a consummation of the primary message in Second Isaiah: the universal sovereignty of Israel's God. Not only will those present among the diaspora Jews witness YHWH's glory, but "all nations and tongues" will know of God's sovereignty, as emissaries go out to the nations.⁸³ Yet this oracle describes the relationship of the nations to YHWH in a new way. Here the revelation of YHWH's glory among the nations does not appear ancillary to the ingathering of the Israelites to Zion. Isa 66:20 does give the impression that the nations will bring the Israelites back to Jerusalem as their offering, but both Blenkinsopp and Westermann argue that a later redactor inserted this verse to correct the radical idea that a Gentile mission would precede the final consummation and that foreigners could become priests and Levites (Isa 66:21).⁸⁴

As a result of the mission of the survivors, "all flesh"⁸⁵ will gather in Jerusalem and worship (להשתחוה) YHWH (Isa 66:23). This verse depicts the nations as bowing in worship to YHWH (שח/חורה). This verb is used elsewhere in Isaiah to speak

⁸¹ Blenkinsopp argues that Isa 56:8 comments on Isa 11:12, extending the ingathering process to Gentile proselytes—a point which is (arguably) echoed in Isa 66:18, 19, 21 (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 56–66, 141–42).

⁸² Childs, *Isaiah*, 542.

⁸³ Blenkinsopp regards Isa 66:19 as the signal "for the mission to the Gentile world to begin." The exact identity of the "survivors" who will carry out this mission is unclear, but he suspects they are Gentile proselytes (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 56–66, 314). If he is correct, it may be that the only explicit statement in the Hebrew Bible authorizing a mission to the nations would be addressed to Gentiles, not Jews. Thus both the Christian call to active mission to the Gentiles and the Jewish tendency to view the conversion of the nations to proper divine worship as something brought about by God, albeit by means of Israel's fulfilling its elect responsibilities, might both be grounded in faithful readings of the Hebrew Bible.

⁸⁴ Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 56–66, 315; Westermann, *Isaiah* 40–66, 423.

⁸⁵ Blenkinsopp believes that it is "too literalistic" to restrict כל־בשר (all flesh) to only the Jewish people. He notes that this verse may have been influenced by Zech 14:16–19 in which all the families of the earth worship YHWH in Jerusalem (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 56–66, 316). However, על־כל־בשר (on all flesh) in Joel 3:1 [Eng. 2:28] may well refer just to Israelites, not to all nations, a reading supported by Acts 2:5–11.

of the nations bowing to Israel,⁸⁶ but this is the first time in Second and Third Isaiah in which foreigners bow to Israel's God in worship.⁸⁷ Though the nations recognize YHWH's sovereignty (רָאָה, e.g., Isa 52:10) throughout Second and Third Isaiah, only here do the nations worship (לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת) YHWH.⁸⁸ Although it is tenuous to suggest that this verse envisions worldwide conversion, this oracle does foresee the universal recognition and *worship* of YHWH.⁸⁹ The distinction between Israel and the nations may remain, but the worshipping of God together in Jerusalem by all eclipses any subservience on the part of the nations to Israel.⁹⁰

Although the framework of Third Isaiah includes some foreigners in the faithful remnant group, one must quickly add that even this inclusion does not signal a universalistic impulse of widespread conversion or the end of all distinctions between Israel and the nations. However, these texts do show much greater openness to foreigners and proselytes and place emphasis on keeping Sabbath and holding fast to the covenant rather than on birth or circumcision. This shift may reflect the greater dualistic tendencies in these eschatological oracles. Just as birth alone does not suffice to make one part of the righteous remnant, for the vision does exclude some Israelites by birth (Isa 66:3–6), so birth alone does not exclude one either. Faithfulness to YHWH and observance of the covenant define the righteous remnant. Although one must recognize that this oracle represents a late eschatological oracle and not any broad tendencies within the Hebrew Bible, one can see here

⁸⁶ Used in a secular context, the verb denotes a mark of respect or greeting to one of higher rank. The verb can also describe an act of homage to a king, "a gesture of submission or surrender" (Preuss, *TDOT* 4:251–52). For usage in Isaiah, see Isa 45:14; 49:7; 49:23; 60:14. The verb is used somewhat ambiguously in 49:7, yet one can infer that the princes bow to Israel or to the servant, particularly since they bow on account of (לְמַעַן) the LORD, not *to* the LORD. The verb is also used of a craftsman bowing to his idol (Isa 44:15, 17; 46:6). Preuss reads Isa 45:14 incorrectly, stating that "foreign nations with their treasures will bow down in worship before Yahweh and acknowledge him as the only God" (Preuss, *TDOT* 4:253). In fact, however, the nations bow to *Israel* while acknowledging that God is with her. Thus, they do not necessarily worship YHWH.

⁸⁷ In Isa 45:23 God proclaims: "To me every knee shall bend!" Though the nations presumably participate in this act of bowing to YHWH, this is an image of submission, not conversion. The distinction between bowing in obeisance and bowing as an act of worship is not insignificant.

⁸⁸ In a religious context, הִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת "can not only stand for 'pray,' but can almost be rendered 'carry out a cultic action (before Yahweh)'" (Preuss, *TDOT*, 4:252).

⁸⁹ As discussed previously, Greenberg makes a distinction between those who "joined themselves to the Jews" and those who "joined themselves to the LORD," asserting that the latter are true converts (Greenberg, "House of Prayer," 32–33). Can one make a similar distinction between those who bow down to Israel and those who bow down to the LORD? The fact that some foreigners may be accepted as priests and Levites (Isa 66:21) makes their conversion a reasonable hypothesis. Yet because "the nations" are still identified as such, in contrast to the Israelites (בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) (66:20), the distinction must remain, at least for the majority of the people.

⁹⁰ While some like Walter Gross, "Israel und die Völker. Die Krise des YHWH-Volk-Konzepts im Jesajabuch" in *Der neue Bund im alten* (ed. Erich Zenger; Freiburg: Herder, 1993) 149–67, see this passage as the culmination of a movement that eventually dissolves any distinction between Israel and the nations of the world, there are a number of indications in Isaiah 66 that this distinction remains intact (Isa 66:10, 13–14, 19–20, 22).

the roots of the New Testament's ideas regarding community membership. This text and the New Testament evince an openness to Gentiles, but in neither place does this represent a lowering of the admission standard to the elect community, let alone a signal that Israel's election has been transcended. Israel is not defined more loosely, but more strictly.

■ Conclusion

Many commentators have understood the servant's charge to become a "covenant to the people, a light to the nations," as indicative of Israel's universal mission to the Gentiles. A close reading of Second Isaiah, however, has revealed that the prophet's primary concern with the exaltation of YHWH need not imply the inclusion of foreigners in a universal covenant community. The references to the nations within Second Isaiah primarily serve a rhetorical function to exalt the sovereignty of Israel's God. The prophet evokes a type of universalism, but one that maintains and even deepens Israel's particularistic election. However, these texts remain cryptic enough to permit wide interpretation, and Second Isaiah's dissolution of foreign gods inevitably brought in its wake questions concerning the ultimate fate of the Gentiles. If the nations no longer have gods of their own, can foreigners, too, become part of YHWH's elect community? Though the prophet, himself, did not address the implications of his argument, it did not take long for later interpreters to grapple with the consequences of YHWH's universal sovereignty. Indeed, a greater receptivity to the inclusion of some Gentiles within the elect group appears even within the late texts of Third Isaiah in chapters 56 and 66.

Yet the centrality—and ingenuity—of the assertion of YHWH's sovereignty emerges as perhaps the most significant point from our close examination of the place of the Gentiles within Second Isaiah. In marked contrast to earlier texts such as Deuteronomy, Joshua, and Micah, Second Isaiah questions the mere existence of foreign deities in exalting the sovereignty of Israel's God. This feature defines the changing understanding of the relationship between the foreign nations and YHWH. If YHWH still works primarily as a national deity, albeit the greatest of the gods, the foreign nations have less relevance to YHWH, for they have their own gods to worship and to serve. Yet as YHWH becomes not just the supreme God, but the only god, even the nations must recognize his power.

By elevating Israel's God to such great heights, Second Isaiah demonstrates to his exilic audience that YHWH, the God of all the world, had indeed not only authorized his people's exile, but also their return and restoration. Yet his rhetorical strategy carried in its wake even further theological repercussions. Although little warrant for Gentile conversion appears within Second Isaiah alone, the dissolution of foreign deities allowed later authors and interpreters to imagine greater inclusion of the nations. Even as early as the authorship of Isaiah 56 and 66, one finds a new openness to the inclusion of some righteous Gentiles among those who worship YHWH. Furthermore, these latest additions to the collection may have influenced

how earlier material in Isaiah 40–55 was read within the context of the canonical book, as suggested by how early Christians came to understand Isaiah's message (Acts 13:44–52).

The implications of Second Isaiah's arguments continue to play themselves out, even to the present day. Jews and Christians place these cryptic texts at the center of discussions concerning election, mission, and conversion. Each faith's reading of the text has informed the unique theological lenses of the Jewish and Christian traditions. Yet a careful reading of the text independent of these two venerable traditions can add further insight to the contemporary theological conversation. Christians who claim a universal mission to Gentiles within Second Isaiah would do well to note the centrality of Israel's election and, accordingly, the legitimacy of Jewish readings of the text. On the other hand, Jews must recognize that the earliest suggestion of Gentile inclusion occurs within the Hebrew Bible itself and emerges from an authentic canonical reading. Over time each tradition has emphasized certain themes while downplaying others. A close reading of the text allows each tradition to learn that just as its own claims are grounded in the text, so too are those of its sister tradition, giving each faith community the ability to gain respect for the other. Only then will there be a solid foundation for honest disagreement concerning election, mission, and the meaning of the call to be a "light to the nations."

The Blackness of Ethiopians: Classical Ethnography and Eusebius's *Commentary on the Psalms**

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The copious works of Eusebius of Caesarea are rarely investigated for their importance as testimonials to ancient knowledge of racial groups or to classical conceptions of ethnicity.¹ Ancient ethnographical literature is not, however, an unimportant background for reading the bishop's works; nor are conceptions of race and ethnicity absent from his prolific literary output.² In fact, racial as-

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¹ Irfan Shahid, "Eusebius and the Arabs," in *Rome and the Arabs* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1984) 95–112, is a solitary instance. Also, to a lesser extent, Sebastian Brock, "Eusebius and Syriac Christianity," in *Eusebius, Christianity and Judaism* (ed. Harold Attridge and Gohei Hata; Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992) 212–34. For broader treatments of Christianity and ancient ethnography, see especially Hervé Inglebert, *Interpretatio Christiana: Les mutations des savoirs (cosmographie, géographie, ethnographie, histoire) dans l'Antiquité chrétienne* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2001) 109–92; Denise Kimber Buell, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); David Olster, "Classical Ethnography and Early Christianity," in *The Formulation of Christianity by Conflict through the Ages* (ed. Katharine Free; Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1995) 9–31.

² See Aaron P. Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius' Praeparatio Evangelica* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). For an overview of Eusebius's literary productivity see Lorenzo Perone, "Eusebius of Caesarea as a Christian Writer," in *Caesarea Maritima: A Retrospective After Two Millennia* (ed. Avner Raban and Kenneth Holum; Leiden: Brill, 1996) 515–30. I use the following abbreviations when referring to Eusebius's works: *Comm. Ps.* (*Commentaria in Psalmos*); *Comm. Isa.* (*Commentaria in Isaiam*); *Proph. Ecl.* (*Propheticae Eclogae*); *PE* (*Praeparatio Evangelica*); *DE* (*Demonstratio Evangelica*); *HE* (*Historia Ecclesiastica*); *SC* (*de Sepulchro Christi*); *Theoph.* (*Theophania*).

sumptions are integral features in the development of various aspects—especially ecclesiological—of Eusebius's thought. Eusebius's prominent characterization of Christianity, which remains consistent throughout his entire literary career, is "the Church from the nations." Such an appellation carried within itself the impulse to describe and define further the "nations" from which members of the Church were drawn. Persians,³ Scythians,⁴ Phoenicians,⁵ Egyptians⁶ and other "barbarian" nations,⁷ as well as Greeks,⁸ left behind the identities of their former lives when they adopted the new way of life and the new identity offered by Christ.⁹

Among such nations, the Ethiopians played a crucial role in the articulation of Christian identity, although this is limited almost exclusively to contexts where Eusebius grappled with determining the historical fulfillment of Hebrew prophetic texts that mentioned Ethiopians. Eusebius's commentaries on the Psalms and on Isaiah (both abundant repositories of often neglected material that illuminates Eusebius's thought)¹⁰ provide most of the relevant passages. In what follows I want to offer a survey of the evidence from his commentary on the Psalms in order to appreciate more fully the salience of Ethiopian ethnicity in Eusebius's construction of ecclesiological identity. At the same time, I hope to delineate the discourses on Ethiopian identity within which Eusebius is working, and against which he positions himself. Doing so will deepen our understanding of Christian representations of both Ethiopians and blackness in late antiquity. Recent interest in the subject has certainly done much to bring such representations to modern attention.¹¹ The value of tracing the literary function of Ethiopians in Christian literature can hardly be ignored. The portrayals range in tone from rather abrasive racism (as in Egyptian monastic texts)¹² to more reserved admiration (in, for instance, the stories of the Ethiopian Moses, although this offers at the same time a stark picture of that rac-

³ See e.g., *PE* 1.4.6; *SC* 16.9.

⁴ See e.g., *PE* 1.4.6; *Theoph.* 3.7; 5.17; *SC* 16.9.

⁵ See e.g., *PE* 1.10.54 (repeated verbatim at 2.praef.1); 2.praef.4.

⁶ See e.g., *PE* 2.1.51; *Theoph.* 3.12–13; *Comm. Isa.* 1.76–77.

⁷ See e.g., *PE* 1.4.6–7; *DE* 1.2.13; *Theoph.* 4.4–5; 5.26, 46.

⁸ See e.g., *PE* 1.5.10, 11, 13.

⁹ See Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument*, ch. 7.

¹⁰ See, however, Michael Hollerich, *Eusebius of Caesarea's Commentary on Isaiah* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999); Carmelo Curti, *Eusebiana, I: Commentarii in Psalmos* (Catania: Università di Catania, 1987); Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981) 97–104.

¹¹ See Gay L. Byron, *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference in Early Christian Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2002); David Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

¹² See Philip Mayerson, "Anti-Black Sentiment in the *Vitae Patrum*," *HTR* 71 (1978) 304–11; on ancient racism generally (though unfortunately omitting any comment on Ethiopians and other black-skinned peoples), see Benjamin H. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

ism).¹³ Eusebius made his own significant contribution to the Christian literary construction of Ethiopian identity.

Eusebius's commentary on the Psalms adopted a positive stance—indeed, one of the most positive among early Christians—toward the dark-skinned Ethiopians while also putting them to good use within his larger (apologetic) argument for Christian triumphalist identity. Remaining incapable of excising totally traditional Ethiopian exoticism in Greek and Roman ethnographical discourses, Eusebius nonetheless showed a remarkable resolve to curb negative portrayals of Ethiopians in Christian biblical interpretation (especially as developed by Origen). In spite of his unabashed liking for Origen as a theologian and biblical scholar, Eusebius formulated a critical approach to Origen's readings of biblical Ethiopians.¹⁴ In these two scholars we see a divergence of interpretation with respect to the biblical Ethiopians towards two separate nodes of identity: that of color symbolism and that of geographical remoteness.

■ Greek Constructions of Ethiopian Identity

Already in Homer the extreme remoteness of the Ethiopians, geographical and mythical, appears central to their representation in the Greek literary imagination. They dwell “apart furthest of men, some beyond the setting sun, others beyond the rising sun.”¹⁵ The division of Ethiopia into two parts, one in the west and the other in the east, would become fixed in the Greek geographical tradition on Ethiopia. This allowed for an almost deliberate ambiguity as to where these distant people dwelt.¹⁶ A certain amount of cartographic indeterminacy perpetuated the radical alterity of the Ethiopians within Hellenizing discourse. These were a people living in lands so far away that one could never precisely fix them within the domain of geographical knowledge. In some sense, Homer's Ethiopia was perfectly suited to

¹³ See Byron, *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference*, 115–20; David Brakke, “Ethiopian Demons: Male Sexuality, the Black-Skinned Other, and the Monastic Self,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10 (2001) 501–35.

¹⁴ See generally *HE* 6, with Patrica Cox Miller, *Biography in Late Antiquity: A Quest for the Holy Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983) 69–101. For Origen's influence on Eusebius, see variously, Charles Kannengiesser, “Eusebius of Caesarea, Origenist,” in *Eusebius, Christianity and Judaism*, 435–66; George Florovsky, “Origen, Eusebius, and the Iconoclastic Controversy,” *CH* 19 (1950) 77–96; Michael J. Hollerich, “Origen's Exegetical Heritage in the Early Fourth Century: The Evidence of Eusebius,” in *Origeniana Quinta* (ed. Robert J. Daly; Leuven: Peeters, 1992) 542–48; Jörg Ulrich, “Euseb und die Juden. Der origeneische Hintergrund,” in *Origeniana Septima* (ed. Wolfgang A. Bienert and Uwe Kühneweg; Leuven University Press, 1999) 135–40.

¹⁵ *Od.* 1.23–24 Αἰθίοπας, τοὶ διχθὰ δεδαΐαται ἔσχατοι ἀνδρῶν· οἱ μὲν δυσσομένου ὑπερίονος, οἱ δ' ἀνιόντος.

¹⁶ See Bonnie MacLachlan, “Feasting with Ethiopians: Life on the Fringe,” *QUCC* 40 (1992) 15–33; J. Y. Nadeau, “Ethiopians,” *Classical Quarterly* 20 (1970) 339–49; James Romm, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992) 49–54; Philip Mayerson, “A Confusion of Indias: Asian India and African India in the Byzantine Sources,” *JAOS* 113 (1993) 169–74; Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, 18–19.

become a "floating signifier,"¹⁷ imbued with a fruitful potency in constructing the world in which the Greeks imagined themselves distinctively placed.¹⁸

Their very remoteness especially qualified these epic Ethiopians for flights of utopian fantasy. In fact, Homer's description of the Ethiopians gives us a first glimpse of the sort of fantastical imagination about societies beyond the range of civilized Mediterranean life, untrammelled by the vices of Greek urban life, which found popular expression in the utopian literature of the Hellenistic age.¹⁹ As Homer's Menelaus recalls, the distant peoples he had visited, the Ethiopians and others, inhabited lands of bucolic abundance and fantastic profusion of natural resources. It was in these far-off lands that "the rams grow their horns quickly. Three times a year their flocks give birth, and there no lord would ever go wanting, nor would his shepherd, for cheese or meat, nor for the sweet milk either, but always the sheep yield a continuous supply for their sucklings."²⁰

The land of the Ethiopians touched the streams of Oceanus; as Iris declares in her anxiety to be on her way: "I go to the streams of Oceanus, to the land of the Ethiopians."²¹ The earth ended with the Ethiopians. This special liminality on the earth's surface marked Ethiopia as occupying a space where the human met the divine. Dwelling beside Oceanus, the Ethiopians inhabited the geographical and conceptual limits of humanity. Any attempt to go beyond Ethiopia was to leave things human for things divine.²² Ethiopia was thus conceived as the earthly retreat of the gods. The Ethiopians' proximity to the gods carried a moral idealization succinctly expressed in the epithet "blameless Ethiopians."²³ It is among the Ethiopians that the gods would feast with humans on familiar terms.²⁴ Such sacrality was strengthened by the claim that the gods not only frequented the land touching Oceanus, but that they found their very beginnings in Oceanus. Homer named Oceanus "the origin

¹⁷ I take the term from Stuart Hall, "Race: The Floating Signifier," videorecording (Northampton, Mass.: Media Education Foundation, 1996).

¹⁸ Similarly see James Redfield's comments on Herodotus ("Herodotus the Tourist," in *Greeks and Barbarians* [ed. Thomas Harrison; New York: Routledge, 2002] 24-49, at 30).

¹⁹ See John Ferguson, *Utopias in the Classical World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975) 18-19, esp. 12; MacLachlan, "Feasting with Ethiopians," 26-30. Moses Hadas, "Utopian Sources in Herodotus," *CP* 30 (1935) 113-21, attempts to elucidate the pre-Herodotean utopian material.

²⁰ *Od.* 4.84. Translation modified from Lattimore. The passage is alluded to in Virgil, *Ecl.* 10.68; see Nadeau, "Ethiopians," 340-41.

²¹ *Il.* 23.206. See also *Il.* 1.423.

²² For those who dwell beyond Oceanus, see *Theog.* 215 (Hesperides); 274 (Gorgons); 289-94 (Heracles crossed Oceanus).

²³ *Il.* 1.423, *pace* MacLachlan, "Feasting With Ethiopians," 22, who sees the epithet as having a purely esthetic reference; see Diodorus Siculus 3.2.3; Strabo 1.1.6; 1.2.28; Lucian *Jup. Trag.* 37; *Prometh.* 17. Though not labeled an Ethiopian, the black-skinned and wooly-haired herald Eurybates is praised for his loyalty and upright moral character; see *Od.* 19.246-248; Frank Snowden, *Before Color Prejudice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983) 69.

²⁴ *Il.* 1.423; 23.206; see Statius, *Theb.* 5.426-430; *Silv.* 4.2.53-56; Virgil, *Aen.* 4.206-208 (where the Mauretanians represent the western Ethiopians, see Nadeau, "Ethiopians," 341).

of the gods.”²⁵ Hesiod provides further details, enumerating the various offspring (usually sea nymphs, “three thousand slender-ankled daughters,” *Theog.* 364–366) of Oceanus.²⁶ Iris herself was descended from Oceanus.²⁷

This mythic portrayal of the Ethiopians would retain much of its strength even in later historical and geographical literature, and this in spite of their placement within new frameworks and the strong urge toward “domestication,” which was inherent in the production of ancient ethnographic knowledge.²⁸ Although Herodotus questioned the existence of Oceanus,²⁹ he maintained the Ethiopians’ remoteness “at the ends of the earth” (3.25).³⁰ His narrative of Persian-Ethiopian contact via the Fish-eaters not only perpetuated, but in fact enhanced, the representation of the Ethiopian as the noble savage.³¹ Unconcerned with foreign conquest, and unimpressed by Persian gold and scarlet robes, their king displayed the heroic strength of the Ethiopian, stringing his massive bow, which was a feat difficult to imitate (3.19–24). Herodotus’s Ethiopians were “long-lived,” (3.21) and they were said to be the tallest and best-looking people in the world (3.20). The blackness of Ethiopian skin, absent from Homer, becomes part of the ethnographic picture after Herodotus,³² while climatic considerations become an integral element in deterministic accounts about the Ethiopians.³³ The utopianizing impulse continued. Menelaus’s account of the marvelous productivity of Ethiopian flocks is complemented by Herodotus’s report of the spontaneous appearance of meat (already cooked) on the Table of the Sun (3.18).³⁴

Less flattering portraits were added to Greek discourse on Ethiopian identity as well. According to physiognomical theory, the Ethiopians’ black skin marked them as cowards.³⁵ Their wooly hair further cemented their connection to cowardice.³⁶ Philo of Alexandria would pick up this identification. While the land of Ethiopia

²⁵ *Il.* 14.201; Plato, *Crat.* 402b (quoted with *Orphica* fr. 15 [Kern]).

²⁶ See *Theog.* 240–269; 287–288; 337–370; 907–911; 956–962; 979–983.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 265–266.

²⁸ See François Hartog, “The Greeks as Egyptologists,” in *Greeks and Barbarians* (ed. Thomas Harrison; New York: Routledge, 2002) 211–228, at 212.

²⁹ Herodotus 2.23; 4.8, 36; see Ptolemy *Geogr.* 7.5.2.

³⁰ See also Herodotus 2.31; Romm, *The Edges of the Earth*, 54–60.

³¹ The encounter between Persian and Ethiopian cultures has been described as “ethnologic satire” by Romm, *The Edges of the Earth*, 59. Incidentally, the episode is briefly and obliquely noted, although as a defeat of the Persians rather than merely an abortive campaign, by Eusebius at *Comm. Isa.* 1.61 (Ziegler 80.4–5).

³² Their skin color results from the hot climate: Herodotus 2.22.

³³ See Strabo 17.2.1 (note the absence of skin color).

³⁴ The meat produced at the Table of the Sun stands in sharp contrast to the still “raw” meat that Odysseus’s men had eaten in *Od.* 12.352–396; see Jean-Pierre Vernant, “Food in the Countries of the Sun,” in *The Cuisine of Sacrifice Among the Greeks* (ed. Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant; trans. Paula Wissing; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989) 164–69.

³⁵ Pseudo-Aristotle, *Physiog.* 812a13–14. It should be noted that the author adds the additional observation that those who are excessively white, such as women, were also cowards (812b1–2).

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 812b30–332.

was surrounded by the river Geon, which signified courage, Ethiopia itself signified ταπείνωσις, "since cowardice is lowly."³⁷ Though Diodorus represented the Ethiopians as the first to honor the gods and foremost in piety,³⁸ other Greek authors in the Roman period drew opposite conclusions from the Ethiopians' black skin. Blackness represented evil,³⁹ and black men possessed bad character.⁴⁰ A man's black skin evinced his suitability for the life of a slave.⁴¹

■ Origen's Ethiopians

While early Christian authors wrote about Ethiopians, it remained for the literary industry of Origen to develop fully what would become standard Christian ideas about Ethiopians. Impetus for such development in the Christian ethnic imagination came predominantly from grappling with problematic passages in the Hebrew scriptures that named Ethiopians. Origen's discussions centered on the application of color symbolism to the soul. Origen considered the occurrence of Ethiopians in key passages of the Hebrew scriptures to signify the blackness of a sinful soul in need of the cleansing that Christ's teaching offers. Adopting Philo's etymology of Cush as "dirt,"⁴² Origen interpreted biblical Ethiopians in such a way as to funnel the various elements of Ethiopian identity into a focus upon the blackened color of their skin.

Origen's commentary on the *Song of Songs* exhibits his most detailed treatment of Ethiopians. Solomon's bride, who is "black and beautiful" (*nigra sum et formosa*) symbolizes the sinful soul that converts to Christianity.⁴³ The Ethiopian bride's blackness signified, for Origen, her ignoble birth and her lack of enlightenment by the Law, which stood in contrast to the rich ancestral heritage of the chosen people.⁴⁴ She represented, therefore, the souls of the gentile nations who had been drawn into the embrace of Christ the bridegroom. She was the "Church of the Gentiles."⁴⁵ But despite her humble origins, Solomon's bride bore the image of God; hence like other biblical black things, such as the tents of Cedar or the

³⁷ Philo, *Leg.* 1.68; cp. Origen, *Sel. Gen.* §§ 39–40 (PG 12:100B), discussed below. See Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, 243 n. 10.

³⁸ Diodorus Siculus 3.2–7; cf. Lucian, *Astrol.* 3–5.

³⁹ Philo, *QG* 2.82.

⁴⁰ Plutarch *Lib. ed.*, 12E; cf. Pindar, *frag. incert.* 225 Snell. See Byron, *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference*, 35–36.

⁴¹ Lucian *Paras.* 41.

⁴² *Sel. Gen.* §§ 39–40 (PG 12:100B); see Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, 17 with n. 3.

⁴³ Origen, *Comm. Cant.* 2.1; see, Byron, *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference*, 72–75; Jean Marie Courtès, "The Theme of 'Ethiopia' and 'Ethiopians' in Patristic Literature," in *The Image of the Black in Western Art*, vol. 2, pt. 1 (ed. Jean Devisse; New York: William Morrow and Co., 1979) 14–16.

⁴⁴ Origen, *Comm. Cant.* 2.1.3.

⁴⁵ See Luc Brésard and Henri Crouzel, *Origène. Commentaire sur le Cantique des Cantiques* (SC 375; Paris: Cerf, 1991) 39–40.

curtains of Solomon, she was beautiful.⁴⁶ This contrast between souls brought to Christ (without the Mosaic Law), and the Jews, recently made jealous by gentile inclusion, guides Origen's discussion of other biblical Ethiopians. There follows a string of interpretations of Moses' Ethiopian bride, Queen Sheba's visit to Solomon, the Ethiopians of the psalmist and of Zephaniah, and Jeremiah's Ethiopian rescuer, Abdimelech.

Harsh feelings of Jewish resentment toward gentiles, who had been accepted into the kingdom and possessed a "spiritual law," found ample foreshadowing, in Aaron and Miriam's jealousy towards Moses' Ethiopian wife. The allegorical approach, for which Origen has become so well-known, is fundamental here. While Miriam represented "the forsaken synagogue," and Aaron represented the priesthood and Pharisees, Moses ("that is, the Law of the Lord") had found conjugal embrace with an anonymous Ethiopian bride ("that is, the spiritual law)."⁴⁷ God would duly punish the jealous arrogance of Miriam and Aaron,⁴⁸ and He would show favor toward the gentile.

Such inclusion is repeated in the narrative about the queen of the South. Sheba, who received a share of Solomon's wisdom, was not, however, explicitly identified as Ethiopian in the relevant biblical passages. Hence Origen adds important glosses to cement the connection: the passage refers to Sheba as the queen of the south, "because Ethiopia lies in the southern parts"; she comes from the ends of the earth because Ethiopia, "is, as it were, situated in the farthest place."⁴⁹ As such, she perfectly represents the church of the gentiles. Similarly, Abdimelech aiding Jeremiah when he was cast into a pit signified those non-Jews who believed in the resurrection from death of Him whom the Jews had handed over to death.⁵⁰ The faithful behavior of Ethiopians like Sheba or Abdimelech exhibited well Origen's claim that, in accordance with Psalm 67 ("Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands to God"), the souls of gentiles not only found inclusion among God's people, but they even outstripped the Jews in coming to God.⁵¹

Throughout his treatment of biblical Ethiopians in his *Song of Songs* commentary, Origen reiterates that it is not merely the non-Jewish ancestry of the Ethiopians that make them an important type of the church of the gentiles; their black skin, in particular, made them apt representatives for souls darkened by sin. The declaration in Zeph 3:10, that those "beyond the rivers of Ethiopia" would be saved refers, according to Origen, to those exceedingly darkened by many sins.⁵² Significantly, he

⁴⁶ Origen, *Comm. Cant.* 2.1.5.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 2.1.23; see also, Origen, *Hom. Num.* 6.4.

⁴⁸ Origen dedicated his seventh *Homily* on Numbers to this theme.

⁴⁹ Origen, *Comm. Cant.* 2.1.14.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 2.1.47.

⁵¹ Ibid. 2.1.42.

⁵² Ibid. 2.1.44; Origen adds the further interpretive possibility that the phrase could refer to those coming to Christianity who are above and beyond the "fullness of the gentiles;" see *Hom. Jerem.* 5.4.

does not emphasize (as we might expect given the dominant conceptions in Greek discourse on Ethiopians) the geographical remoteness that such a phrase might evoke. Already when he sought to explicate the allegorical significance of Sheba, his glosses on Ethiopia's location in the farthest south functioned only to connect Sheba with Ethiopia in order to portray her encounter with Solomon as another example of the gentiles' inclusion among God's people.⁵³ Such geographical notes were made in passing and were never emphasized. The motif of spiritual remoteness, of a soul's darkness as a result of sin, dominates his conception of Ethiopia. Origen concludes: "Every single soul is black (*nigra*) because of sins, but beautiful (*formosa*) on account of repentance."⁵⁴

For good reason, Origen's discussion in his commentary on the *Song of Songs* has found ample attention in modern treatments of early Christian representations of blacks or Ethiopians. Despite some omissions,⁵⁵ Origen's commentary remains one of the most systematic and comprehensive attempts by Christian thinkers in the ancient world to make sense of the Ethiopians in the Hebrew scriptures. Other less-noticed discussions in Origen's corpus, however, add considerably to our understanding of his manipulation of Ethiopian identity. Throughout we find a persistently allegorical vision of biblical Ethiopians.⁵⁶ In his commentary on the *Song of Songs*, Origen allowed for a somewhat positive conceptualization of Ethiopians inasmuch as the souls blackened by sin were nonetheless beautiful because of the impress of the image of God. Other statements, however, reveal a more straightforwardly negative sense. These other discussions seem to be driven solely by his attempt to engage allegorically with whatever text is under consideration. While some verses provoked a more negative interpretation, Origen's general approach to biblical Ethiopians remained more or less consistent: their skin color confined them to the role of symbols for sinful souls.

Following a quotation of *Song of Songs* 1:5, Origen reiterates in his homily on Jeremiah (11.6) his interpretation of the black bride as the sinful soul. But while his commentary on this passage left the Ethiopian as a symbol for the church of the gentiles in their present identity, the homily draws a distinction between the soul's pre-conversion and post-conversion identities. "At first we are likened to the Ethiopians in our souls, then we are cleansed in order that we might become whiter according to the passage that says, 'Who is she who comes up whitened

⁵³ Origen, *Comm. Cant.* 2.1.14.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 2.1.56.

⁵⁵ For instance, the episode of the Ethiopian eunuch's conversion at the hands of Philip (Acts 8.26–40) is raised in *Comm. Jo.* 1.15.85 only with regard to what Philip says; Origen exhibits a disinterest in drawing the interpretive richness of the Ethiopian's racially and sexually exotic status. For discussion of the passage's importance, see Byron, *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference*, 109–15.

⁵⁶ The only exception seems to be in his apology against Celsus (*Cels.* 5.34, 37, 38), where, apparently drawing on Herodotus 2.29, Origen notes that unlike the Arabs and Egyptians, the Ethiopians worship only Zeus and Dionysus.

(λελευκανθισμένη)’ (*Song* 8.5).”⁵⁷ The purified soul of the Christian has, therefore, been freed from its darkened Ethiopian-like state. Ethiopian identity, allegorically understood, is the pre-conversion state of a soul; it is an identity to be shunned, a sinful darkness to be washed in the whitening process of conversion.

Tharseis (= Tarshish), whose exact location seems to shift among early Christians (as we will see below with Eusebius), becomes linked with the Ethiopians and carries, for Origen, a similar signification. A note on Ps 47:8 (LXX) first makes the connection: “Tharseis refers to a part of Ethiopia; the city Tarsus is called Tharseis by Jonah.”⁵⁸ Later he supplements this information in the *Selecta in Psalmos*. When the psalmist declares “the Ethiopians will fall before Him, and his enemies will lick the dust, the king of Tharseis and the island . . . (Ps. 71.9 LXX),” Origen explains, “I suppose a difference from those coming to Christ is indicated in these words.”⁵⁹ Another note on the same verse continues: “Tharseis is an Ethiopian nation (ἔθνος). Further, the word Tharseis indicates the hyacinthine (ὑακίνθινον) color, as we have from the prophet: ‘Their likeness [was] like Tharseis.’”⁶⁰ A number of difficulties attend these brief glosses on Tharseis and the Ethiopians. Important for the present inquiry is the connection being made between the city and the nation. Biblical prophecies against the city and king of Tharseis, delivered because of their hostility to God, extended to the Ethiopians as a whole. Here Ethiopians were not “black and beautiful,” their beauty had been eclipsed by darkness.

The force of this negative interpretive schema for the Ethiopians is played out in other relevant passages. Origen adopted the Philonic etymology: Ethiopia was Cush in Hebrew; as such it “indicates darkness . . . because of the darkness of their skin, which Ethiopia has beside its other brothers.”⁶¹ Commenting upon Is 43:3–4

⁵⁷ Origen, *Hom. Jerem.* 11.6 (Pierre Nautin, *Origène. Homélie sur Jérémie* [SC 232; Paris: Cerf, 1976] 430): καὶ Αἰθίοψιν ἡμεῖς κατ’ ἀρχὰς τὴν ψυχὴν εἰοίκαμεν, εἴτα ἀποσμηχόμεθα, ἵνα λαμπρότεροι γενώμεθα κατὰ τὸ τίς αὕτη ἡ ἀναβαίνουσα λελευκανθισμένη;

⁵⁸ Origen, *Sel. Ps.* 47.8 (PG 12:1440BC): Θάρσεις, θαλάσσης. Λέγεται δὲ Θάρσεις μέρος Αἰθιοπίας· καὶ Ταρσὸς ἡ πόλις παρὰ Ἰωνᾶ Θαρσεῖς καλεῖται.

⁵⁹ Origen, *Sel. Ps.* 71.9 (PG 12:1524C): Διαφορὰν οἶμαι δηλοῦσθαι ἐν τούτοις τῶν τῷ Χριστῷ προσιόντων. Rather than take the phrase as “the difference of the Christians,” I opted for “difference from the Christians.” My choice follows from consideration of the verbal form’s relationship with the genitive: διαφέρω+ gen. = “differ from someone” (see LSJ s.v. III.4). The noun form combined with the genitive can be taken either as “a difference of one person [toward someone else]” (see LSJ s.v. II; Lampe s.v. 1b) or as “a difference from someone” or “between someone and another” (see BAGD s.v.; Herbert W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920] 334§1430). Because of the brevity of Origen’s comment, certainty is impossible. But my translation of the phrase as a genitive of distinction is strengthened by the fact that Origen’s previous note was based on a psalm announcing the destruction of kings who are hostile to Zion, among them the king of Tharseis. Furthermore, in the present note, the king of Tharseis seems to stand in a series of enemies who are nonetheless brought into submission to the Lord. While Eusebius will offer a positive reading of the passage (for which, see below), such a reading may not be warranted here.

⁶⁰ Ibid.: Θαρσεῖς ἔθνος Αἰθιοπικόν ἐστιν. Ἐτι τὸ Θαρσεῖς σημαίνει τὸ χρῶμα τὸ ὑακίνθινον. ὥς παρὰ τῷ προφῆτῃ ἔχομεν· Ὁμοίωμα αὐτῶν ὥς Θαρσεῖς.

⁶¹ Origen, *Sel. Gen.* 11.13 (PG 12:100B): Αἰθιοπίας, ἣτις ἐστὶ Ἑβραϊστὶ Χοῦς· σημαίνει καὶ σκότωσιν. Ἀπὸ οὖν τῆς Αἰθιοπίας, τουτέστιν ἀπὸ τοῦ Χοῦς, διὰ τὸ σκοτῶδες τῆς χροίας, ἥς ἔσχε

("I gave Ethiopia and Egypt as your exchange [ἄλλαγμα], and Syene for you"), Origen leads on, "Let the one who is able enquire if the exchange, that is the true Ethiopia and spiritual Egypt, of the true Israel was given by God, redeeming Israel from all lawlessness."⁶² Before concluding his remarks on Ethiopia, he ventures to say, "that I might make a more bold interpretation, Syene is the exchange for Jerusalem, Egypt for Judaea, Ethiopia for those who fear [the Lord]."⁶³ Assuming his reader can easily identify the true Ethiopia and the true Egypt, Origen continues his discussion (on "what will someone give in exchange for their soul"). But the point is sufficiently clear: the true Ethiopia and Egypt are distinct from, or are even in opposition to, the true Israel and those who fear the Lord. Ethiopia is certainly no figure of the Church here.⁶⁴

Origen's tone is harsher in his explanation of the daily, or rather, "supersubstantial," (ἐπιούσιος) bread in the Lord's Prayer.⁶⁵ Here the Ethiopian soul, one that has "nourished upon the serpent," is beyond the point of redemption; but the one who receives the supersubstantial bread becomes a son of God:

The one who partakes of the serpent is none other than the spiritual Ethiopian, openly changing even himself into a snake through the food⁶⁶ of the serpent so that he is abused by the Word, and should he say that he wants to be baptized, he hears "snakes, brood of vipers, who showed you to flee from the coming wrath?" (Matt 3:7).⁶⁷

In this passage Origen derived his spiritual Ethiopian from the psalmist's declaration, "You will crush the heads of the serpents on the water; you crushed the head of the serpent, you gave him [as] food to the Ethiopian peoples" (Ps 73:13–14 LXX).

"But if it is not clear," Origen proceeds, "that, since the son of God substantially subsists (οὐσιωδῶς ὑφεστῶτος), and the opposing one also subsists, the nourishment of each of them is [the food] of this one or that one [that is, the child of God

παρὰ τοὺς λοιποὺς ἀδελφούς. It should be noticed that in contrast to Philo's treatment of the same passage (where the river Geon represented courage and Cush represented cowardice), Origen here merely limits himself to the etymology of darkness and omits further moral evaluation.

⁶² Origen, *Comm. Matth.* 12.28 (PG 13:1045A, 1048A), citing Ps 129:8 (LXX): ἀπὸ τούτων δὲ ὁ δυνάμενος ἐξεταζέτω εἰ τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ἄλλαγμα δίδεται ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ῥυομένου τὸν Ἰσραὴλ ἐκ πασῶν τῶν ἀνομιῶν αὐτοῦ ἢ ἀληθινὴ Αἰθιοπία καὶ ἴν' οὕτως ὀνομάσω πνευματικὴ Αἴγυπτος, καὶ τῆς Αἰγύπτου ἢ Σοῖνη.

⁶³ Ibid.: ἵνα δὲ τολμηρότερον ζητήσω, τάχα Σοῖνη μὲν ὑπὲρ τῆς Ἱερουσαλήμ, Αἴγυπτος δὲ ὑπὲρ τῆς Ἰουδαίας, Αἰθιοπία δὲ ὑπὲρ τῶν φοβουμένων.

⁶⁴ For the opposite interpretation of this passage see Eusebius, *Comm. Isa.* 2.24 (Ziegler 277).

⁶⁵ Origen, *Or.* 27.12. General discussion of Origen's argument here may be found in Virginia L. Noel, "Nourishment in Origen's *On Prayer*," in *Origeniana Quinta*, 481–87.

⁶⁶ Alistair Stewart-Sykes supplies "snares" after the neuter article here (*Tertullian, Cyprian & Origen on the Lord's Prayer* [Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004] 182).

⁶⁷ Origen, *Or.* 27.12: ὁ μετέχων οὐκ ἄλλος ἐστὶ τοῦ νοητοῦ Αἰθίοπος, διὰ τὰς τοῦ δράκοντος ἄρκυς μεταβάλλον καὶ αὐτὸς εἰς ὄφιν, ὥστε ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου ὀνειδιζόμενον αὐτὸν, κἂν λέγη βαπτίζεσθαι θέλειν, ἀκούειν ὄφεις, γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν, τίς ὑπέδειξεν ὑμῖν φυγεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς;

and the “spiritual Ethiopian”], why do we shrink from receiving [nourishment] from any power—whether better or worse?”⁶⁸ After citing the example of Peter being told to eat all foods before meeting with Cornelius, Origen adds: “Some such beings can serve as nourishing food for us, while of others quite the opposite is true, unless⁶⁹ God purifies them and makes them all nourishing—even those of every kind.”⁷⁰ Origen’s attitude in this discussion of the supersubstantial bread is intriguing, and his identification of the psalmist’s Ethiopian with the soul that partakes of the supersubstantial serpent—satanic nourishment to be sure—is consistent with the trend we have seen in his other statements on biblical Ethiopians. In spite of attempts at conversion and baptism, the one nourished by the serpent’s sustenance finds only rejection from Christ. We find, then, that Origen’s manipulation of the trope of the biblical Ethiopian has now turned back on itself: elsewhere the figure of the Church of the gentiles, the Ethiopian is here linked with the powers of darkness to such an extent that redemption is made impossible (though even in the *De oratione* there is some slippage: “unless God purifies them and makes them all nourishing”). The darkness of the Ethiopian’s skin has dimmed the prospects of inclusion among the people of God.

A final passage provides the furthest point toward which Origen shifts away from his vision of the Church as the Ethiopian bride. Origen comments on the phrase “the end (πέρας) of the nations,” which occurs in a prophecy by Ezekiel on the destruction of the nations on the day of the Lord (Ezek 30:3): This “is the hand of the Lord against all Egypt and Ethiopia; the prophecies against men are said against the Egyptians, but those against the opposing powers [are said] against the Ethiopians.”⁷¹ Ethiopia becomes a figure of demonic forces (i.e., “opposing powers”). Such a conception has moved beyond the range of human souls darkened by sin to spiritual powers that lie opposed to God.

■ Eusebius and the Tropes of Ethiopian Identity

As one of the foremost biblical scholars of antiquity, and as the inheritor of Origen’s library,⁷² Eusebius of Caesarea proves an interesting figure in early Christian discourse on Ethiopians. Interestingly he consistently off-sets Origen’s increasingly

⁶⁸ Ibid.: εἰ δὲ μὴ ἀπεμφαίνει, οὐσιωδῶς ὕφεστώτος τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ ὕφεστώτος δὲ καὶ τοῦ ἀντικειμένου, ἐκότερον αὐτῶν τροφὴν γίνεσθαι τοῦδε ἢ τοῦδε, τί ὀκνοῦμεν παραδέξασθαι ἐπὶ γε πασῶν τῶν δυνάμεων κρειττόνων καὶ χειρόνων.

⁶⁹ Regarding the use of “unless,” I follow Stewart-Sykes, *Tertullian, Cyprian & Origen*, 183.

⁷⁰ Ibid. (translation modified from O’Meara): διδάσκει τούσδε μὲν τροφίμους ἡμῖν τυγχάνειν τούσδε δὲ ἐναντίως ἔχειν, ἕως καθάρσις πάντας ποιήσῃ τροφίμους ὁ θεὸς ἢ τοὺς ἀπὸ παντὸς γένους.

⁷¹ Origen, *Sel. Ezech.* 30.3 (PG 13:824C): Πέρας ἐθνῶν ἐστὶ Κυρίου χεὶρ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν Αἴγυπτον καὶ Αἰθιοπίαν· καὶ τὰ μὲν πρὸς ἀνθρώπους ἐπὶ Αἰγυπτίους λέγεται, τὰ δὲ πρὸς τὰς ἀντικειμένας δυνάμεις πρὸς τοὺς Αἰθίопας.

⁷² See HE 6.32; on Eusebius’s library see the thorough study of Andrew J. Carriker, *The Library of Eusebius of Caesarea* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

negative image that had been fostered with so much exegetical care. Although biblically-rooted, Eusebius's conceptualization of Ethiopian identity followed lines already laid down by classical authors. Furthermore, his rhetorical aims differed from his scholarly forebear at Caesarea. He located Ethiopian identity more firmly than Origen in *geographical* remoteness, and at the same time, he eschewed the color symbolism that had formed an integral part of Origen's interpretive design. In the following remarks I hope to elucidate Eusebius's motivations for manipulating Ethiopian identity in his commentary on the Psalms by offering a survey of those passages whose authenticity is beyond doubt.⁷³ Four psalms in particular warranted the Caesarean commentator's attention: Psalms 67, 71, 73 and 86. In spite of the near-total neglect of Eusebius in surveys of Christian attitudes toward the Ethiopians,⁷⁴ his Psalms commentary alone requires careful consideration by anyone seeking to appreciate Christian ethnographic imagination in late antiquity.⁷⁵

By doggedly pursuing a "triumphalist" interpretation of the Hebrew scriptures, which is epitomized in the phrase "the Church from the nations," Eusebius interprets biblical passages that mention the Ethiopians in a positive sense. Such instances show his focus upon the geographical remoteness of the Ethiopians. As inhabitants of the hazy horizons of human geography, at the ends of the earth, they evinced the sweeping extent of Christ's kingdom. If even those who dwelt farthest away had become incorporated into the kingdom, then no people could be left out of the universal scope of Christianity.

Ethiopia will extend her hand (Comm. Ps. 67:32)

Psalm 67 and the three psalms that precede it were, for Eusebius, prophetic texts about the apostolic proclamation of the Gospel and the rise of Christianity. In particular, these psalms spoke of the "calling of the nations (κλήσις τῶν ἔθνων)," ⁷⁶ the prophetic Spirit invoking God, "as if in the character (ἐκ προσώπου) of the apostles," to strengthen their kerygmatic labors and aid them in completing "the

⁷³ Issues of authenticity regarding the commentary material contained in PG 23 and 24 have been discussed by Eduard Schwartz, "Eusebios von Caesarea," *RE* 11 (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Buchhandlung 1909) cols. 1435–1436; Marie-Josèphe Rondeau and Jean Kirchmeyer, "Eusèbe de Césarée. Les psaumes," in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* (ed. André Rayez; Paris: Beauchesnes, 1961) 4.2.1689–90.

⁷⁴ Eusebius is omitted from, for example, Byron, *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference*; and Courtès, "The Theme of 'Ethiopia' and 'Ethiopians' in Patristic Literature."

⁷⁵ While the present discussion focuses on his *Comm. Ps.*, there are important discussions in his other (primarily exegetical) works; e.g., *Proph. Ecl.* 4.22 (PG 22:1229C); *Comm. Isa.* 2.24 (Ziegler 277); 2.28 (Ziegler 294); *DE* 5.4.3; *Theoph.* 1.38. Each of these is noteworthy for their seemingly more negative attitude to the Ethiopians; however, in almost every case they seem to be guilty by association with Egypt, the bastion of idolatry, but even then they are often separated, at least to some degree, from the negative portrayal of Egyptians. All but the latter (which has its own difficulties as a Syriac translation) refuse to adopt any sort of color symbolism.

⁷⁶ Eusebius, *Comm. Ps.* 67.2–4 (PG 23:677D).

race of the Gospel without hindrance.”⁷⁷ When later the psalmist declared that, “Embassies will come from Egypt, Ethiopia will extend her hand to God (Ps 67: 32),” Eusebius remarks that the context for understanding the references to foreign peoples should be the swift and extensive growth of Christ’s teachings:

Clearly, in these words [the apostles] preach to Egypt, secretly meaning the idolaters, since idolatry began from Egypt. But also it says that Ethiopia extended her hand to God, indicating the ends of the earth (τὰ ἔσχατα τῆς οἰκουμένης). Then they call together all the kingdoms of the earth, all the nations being indicated in this manner.”⁷⁸

His introductory comments on the psalm as a whole already lay down the lines Eusebius will take when he eventually reaches the remote Ethiopians in v. 32.

When he finally devotes attention to v. 32, for special treatment of its own (nineteen pages later), Eusebius reiterates his initial evaluation of Egypt as the birthplace of idolatry. When God scattered the nations to create a space for the Church, Egypt seemed a natural starting-point since the inhabitants were “idolaters to the extreme.” And “the Egyptians were the most superstitious of all humans and all nations.”⁷⁹ Hence the embassies from Egypt, that is, “those who were about to come out of Egypt and cross over to the knowledge of God,” signified “the whole race (γένος) of idolaters.”⁸⁰ While Eusebius reserved for Egypt a space of *spiritual* remoteness, distinctively idolatrous and superstitious, Ethiopia was strictly allotted the sense of *geographical* remoteness.

The phrase, “Ethiopia extends her hands to God,” Eusebius argues, “indicates the farthest parts (τὰ ἄκρα) of the human world. For the statement indicates that they will come from all the nations, from the rising of the sun to its setting. . . . Even in history (κατὰ τὴν ἱστορίαν) it is possible to say that this has been fulfilled in the Ethiopian whom the Acts of the Apostles mentions.”⁸¹ For he nearly outran the other nations, having been deemed worthy of the knowledge of the Savior before everybody else. The Acts of the Apostles also makes clear that the embassies from Egypt came in history (κατὰ τὴν ἱστορίαν) when it says that on the day of Pentecost, “members of all nations, including Egypt, were present, “like embassies of the nations.”⁸²

⁷⁷ Eusebius, *Comm. Ps.* 67.2–4 (PG 23:680AB).

⁷⁸ Eusebius, *Comm. Ps.* 67.2–4 (PG 23:680B): Σαφῶς γὰρ διὰ τούτων Αἴγυπτον εὐαγγελίζονται, τοὺς εἰδωλολάτραις αἰνιτιτόμενοι· ἐπεὶ ἐξ Αἰγύπτου κατήρξατο ἡ εἰδωλολατρεία. Ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν Αἰθιοπίαν προφθάσαι χεῖρα αὐτῆς τῷ θεῷ φασί, τὰ ἔσχατα τῆς οἰκουμένης δηλοῦντες. Εἰθ’ ἐξῆς τὰς βασιλείας τῆς γῆς πάσας ἀθρώως συγκαλοῦσι, τῶν ἐθνῶν ἀπάντων τοῦτον σημαινομένων τὸν τρόπον.

⁷⁹ Eusebius, *Comm. Ps.* 67.31–32 (PG 23:717A): Ἦμελλε τοῦ ἐνεργεῖν καὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν πρώτων ἄρχεσθαι τῶν καθ’ ὑπερβολὴν εἰδωλολατρῶν. Αἰγύπτιοι δὲ ἦσαν οἱ πάντων ἀνθρώπων καὶ πάντων ἐθνῶν δεισιδαιμονέστατοι.

⁸⁰ Ibid.: Καὶ τὸ μὲν πάντων εἰδωλολατρῶν γένος διὰ τῶν ἐλευσομένων ἐξ Αἰγύπτου καὶ διαβησομένων ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ γνῶσιν δεδήλωται.

⁸¹ Eusebius is followed here by Pseudo-Athanasius, *Expos. in Psalm.* 67 §32 (PG27:304C).

⁸² Eusebius, *Comm. Ps.* 67.31–32 (PG 23:717A–C): διὰ δὲ τοῦ ἐξῆς ἐπιλεγόμενον· Αἰθιοπία

With slightly different wording, Eusebius makes clear his interpretation of the Ethiopians in the passage. At the edges, or the farthest parts of the inhabited world, the Ethiopians represent the entrance into the Church of those most distant of peoples. His assertion that Ethiopia extended her hands to God, referring to the coming of all nations from the rising of the sun to its setting, is interesting. The connection of Ethiopia to both the eastern and western horizons, common in classical literature, is not present anywhere in the psalm. In fact, mention of the western regions occurs in v. 5 ("make way for the One who has come in the places of the setting sun"), and the eastern regions are mentioned in v. 34 ("the Lord has come on the heaven of heavens in the places of the rising sun"). Eusebius soon draws these two horizontal verses together, although for rather different purposes than imagining the universality of the Church's reach. Instead, he allegorically links the setting sun to Christ's passion and death, and he attaches its rising to Christ's restoration (ἀποκατάστασις).⁸³ His claim, therefore, that Ethiopia's extended hand indicates the incoming of the nations of the world ("from the rising of the sun to its setting") reveals that the classical conception of Ethiopia divided in both the far East and the far West was a natural assumption on the commentator's part.

Eusebius's discussion is remarkable for its consistent attempt to make the biblical Egyptians and Ethiopians representative of a broader group while at the same maintaining their historical reality in the historical narrative of the expansion of Christianity. For Eusebius, the history of Christianity was marked by a show of God's power in overcoming barriers that may have seemed insurmountable. Such evangelic power had even proved efficacious against the stronghold of idolatry in Egypt, fortified as it was by the antiquity of its impiety and superstition. This evangelic power had, furthermore, broken down the geographical barrier that separated the Ethiopians at the ends of the earth from the rest of humanity. Eusebius concludes his discussion of these Ethiopians: "This was fulfilled not otherwise than through the teaching of our Savior alone. There is therefore no nation (ἔθνος), no land, no race (γένος) of humans, no kingdom in the whole world (οἰκουμένη) where the peoples (λαοὶ) established by God do not fulfill their calling."⁸⁴

προφθάσει χεῖρα αὐτῆς τῷ θεῷ, τὰ ἄκρα τῆς τῶν ἀνθρώπων οἰκουμένης. Σημάνει γὰρ ὁ λόγος, ὡς ἄρα ἐξ ἀπάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν τῶν ἀπ' ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου μέχρι δυσμῶν ἤξουσιν... Ἔστι δὲ καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἱστορίαν τοῦτο πεπληρωθῆαι φάναι ἐπὶ τοῦ Αἰθίοπος, οὗ μέμνηται τῶν ἀποστόλων αἱ Πράξεις. Σχεδὸν γὰρ προέφθασεν οὗτος τὰ λοιπὰ ἔθνη, καταξιωθεὶς πρὸ πάντων τῆς γνώσεως τοῦ Σωτῆρος. Ὅπως δὲ καὶ πρέσβεις ἦλθον ἐξ Αἰγύπτου κατὰ τὴν ἱστορίαν, πάλιν αἱ Πράξεις τῶν ἀποστόλων δηλοῦσιν, ἐν αἷς εἴρηται, ὡς ἄρα κατὰ τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς Πεντηκοστῆς ... Οὗτοι δὴ οὖν πάντες ὥσπερ εἰς πρέσβεις ἐτύγχανον τῶν ἐθνῶν, τῆς τοῦ ἀγίου Πνεύματος ἀπαρχῆς κατηξιωμένοι.

⁸³ Eusebius, *Comm. Ps.* 67.31–32 (PG 23:720A).

⁸⁴ Eusebius, *Comm. Ps.* 67.31–32 (PG 23:717CD): Ἄ καὶ οὐδ' ἄλλως ἢ διὰ μόνης τῆς τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν διδασκαλίας τέλους ἐτύγχανεν. Οὐκ ἔστιν οὖν ἔθνος, οὐ χώρα, οὐ γένος ἀνθρώπων, οὐ βασιλεία καθ' ὅλης τῆς οἰκουμένης, ἔνθα οὐχὶ λαοὶ τῷ θεῷ συστάντες τὸ κέλευσμα ἀποπληροῦσιν.

The Ethiopians will fall before him (Comm. Ps. 71:9)

The commentary on Ps 71:9–11 resumes the classical notion of a divided Ethiopia in the far reaches of the earth in the East and the West, however in attempting to develop a more comprehensive vision of the psalmist's world and of the Ethiopians dwelling there, significant details will tax Eusebius's exegetical skills. "The Ethiopians will fall before him, and his enemies will lick the dust, kings of Tharsis and the islands will bring gifts, kings of Arabs and of Saba will convey gifts." These Ethiopians, Eusebius affirms, are those who dwell at the edges (τὰ ἔσχατα) of our world, "both those toward the rising sun and those towards its setting."⁸⁵ The assertion that Ethiopians were at the eastern and western ends of the earth was a completely natural notion (κατὰ φύσιν). Even non-Christians, "those outside," were pleased to declare, "The Ethiopians who live apart furthest of men, some beyond the setting sun, others beyond the rising sun."⁸⁶ Eusebius's quotation of Homer here is noteworthy for two reasons: 1) it is one of the only places he cites Homer verbatim;⁸⁷ and 2) he is the only Christian author to make more than a vague allusion to these Homeric lines. Indeed, since the notion of a divided Ethiopia was commonplace in Greco-Roman literature, it is difficult to connect Christian conceptions of Ethiopia directly to that of Homer. It is only here that the literary evidence is beyond doubt.

From Homer, Eusebius moves on without pause to quote (the already commented upon) Ps 67:32 ("Ethiopia will extend her hand to God") and Zeph 3:10 ("they will bring me bounty from the ends of the rivers of Ethiopia"). Though marked an outsider, Homer found a place among Eusebius's authoritative scriptural and prophetic witnesses. The context of interpretation, as we will see, was again thoroughly historical. Eusebius's citation of Homer is at odds with the dominant function of the poet within Christian discourse, where Homer's importance lay more in his use as a gold mine of allegorical richness.⁸⁸ And so, strikingly, Eusebius's invocation of Homer appears as one of the only instances of the poet's historical value for the early Christian imagination.

Eusebius's historicizing interpretation follows the thrust of his comments on Ps 67:32. Ethiopian worship of the Lord must prophetically signify the incorporation of all nations within the Church. If Ethiopia lies in both the far East and the far West, then

⁸⁵ Eusebius, *Comm. Ps.* 71.9–11 (PG 23:805B): ...οἱ τὰ ἔσχατα τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς οἰκουμένης οἰκοῦσι, τὰ τε πρὸς ἀνατολὰς καὶ τὰ πρὸς δύοντα ἥλιον.

⁸⁶ Ibid., citing *Od.* 1.22–23: "Οθεν καὶ παρὰ τοῖς ἔξω τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς λόγου κατὰ φύσιν εἰρησθαι δοκεῖ τὸ,

*Αἰθίοπας, τοὶ διχθὰ δεδαΐαται ἔσχατοι ἀνδρῶν·
Οἱ μὲν δυσσομένοι ὑπερίονος, οἱ δ' ἀνιόντος.*

⁸⁷ The first line of the passage cited here (*Od.* 1.22) is quoted also in VC 4.7.1; other Homeric lines are found at *Mart. Pal.* 1.1 (*Il.* 2.204–205) and *LC* 2.5 (*Il.* 4.102). For a useful discussion of these and other allusions to Homer in Eusebius, see Carriker, *The Library of Eusebius*, 131–33.

⁸⁸ See Jean Pépin, "The Platonic and Christian Ulysses," in *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought* (ed. Dominic J. O'Meara; Albany: SUNY Press, 1982) 3–18.

prophecies of Ethiopian salvation and piety must also include the nations between these two regions. Ethiopia thus becomes a geographical frame for the entire world; what is attributed to Ethiopia must also apply to all that Ethiopia embraces:

Through all of these verses, Scripture indicates that the ends of the earth will receive the knowledge of the One prophesied and will worship Him, falling before Him and genuflecting. . . . And the nations within the inhabited world (οἰκουμένη) are also indicated through the phrase, "the Ethiopians dwelling at the ends of the earth." It is manifest that those believing in Him everywhere on the earth. . . . will send up worship to the God over all.⁸⁹

The geographical remoteness of Ethiopia at the earth's borders thus effectively represents the universality of the spread of Christianity. Eusebius's interpretive focus is both consistently historical and stubbornly triumphalist.

Strikingly, the phrase directly following that of the Ethiopians ("his enemies will lick the dust") receives an allegorical turn: "But also his enemies it says will lick the dust, being like their father the serpent. . . . Thus, then, you will see the enemies of Christ's Church licking the dust and fleshly pleasures."⁹⁰ Since human bodies were originally fashioned from dust, the signification of the present phrase seems clear for Eusebius. His shift in methods of interpretation in a single verse cautions us from easily slipping Eusebius into one interpretive category or another. He is neither a simple historicist nor a simple allegorist, but he instead demonstrates a complex engagement with scriptural texts in his development of a comprehensive, monolithic vision of the world.⁹¹

Before turning to the next passage of his commentary, it is particularly interesting to notice Eusebius's interpretation of Tharsis and Saba, who are mentioned in the subsequent verses of Psalm 71 ("kings of Tharsis and the islands will bring gifts, kings of Arabs and of Saba will convey gifts"). If we keep in mind Origen's argument that Tharsis (Tharseis) was to be identified as a city of the Ethiopians, Eusebius's contrary identification is significant. He begins his discussion of these lines:

⁸⁹ Eusebius, *Comm. Ps.* 71.9–11 (PG 23:805C): Δι' ὧν πάντων ὁ λόγος σημαίνει τὰ ἔσχατα τῆς γῆς τὴν τοῦ προφητευομένου γνῶσιν ἀναλήψεσθαι, καὶ προσκυνῆσειν αὐτῷ, προσπίπτοντας καὶ γόνυ κλίνοντας. . . . Διὰ δὲ τῶν Αἰθιοπῶν τῶν τὰ ἔσχατα τῆς γῆς οἰκούντων καὶ τὰ εἰσω τῆς οἰκουμένης ἔθνη δηλοῦνται. Καὶ πρόδηλον ὅπως ἀπανταχοῦ γῆς οἱ εἰς αὐτὸν πεπιστευκότες, γόνυ κλίνοντες καὶ εἰς αὐτὴν προπίπτοντες τὴν γῆν, δι' αὐτοῦ τὴν προσκύνῃσιν τῷ ἐπὶ πάντων ἀναπέμπουσι Θεῷ.

⁹⁰ Eusebius, *Comm. Ps.* 71.9–11 (PG 23:805D): Ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ ἐχθροὶ αὐτοῦ, φησὶ, χοῦν λείξουσιν, ἐξομοιωθέντες τῷ ἑαυτῶν πατρὶ τῷ ὄφει. . . . Οὕτω δ' οὖν ὄψει τοὺς τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ πολεμίους τὸν χοῦν καὶ τὰς σωματικὰς ἡδονὰς περιλιχωμένους.

⁹¹ See Carmelo Curti, "L'esegesi di Eusebio di Cesarea: caratteri e sviluppo," in *Eusebiana, I: Commentarii in Psalmos* (Catania: Università di Catania, 1987) 195–213. Elsewhere Eusebius has been accused of lacking exegetical tact (Erik Peterson, "Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der politischen Theologie im Imperium Romanum," in *Theologische Traktate* [Munich: Hochland Bücherei, 1951] 90). But applying a modern criterion of "tact" (whatever that might mean) can hardly help us appreciate early Christian reading practices.

In these words, the passage, separating the world (οἰκουμένη) into two parts, distinguishes the climate (κλίμα) towards the setting sun; [the phrase “kings of Tharsis and the islands”] signifies the sea towards the west and the islands in it. . . . When Tharseis is related in Ezekiel, the Seventy translate it as Carthage. But the other climate, the one towards the rising sun, is mentioned through the phrase, “the kings of Arabs and Saba.” For the race (γένος) of the Arabs is eastern; and beyond it the Persian parts and the land of the Sabaites are said to be.⁹²

Here again, Eusebius exhibits persistent concern to find the universality and worldwide expansion of Christianity in the psalmist’s words. By refusing to follow Origen’s assumption that Tharseis was an Ethiopian city and instead locating it farther to the West, Eusebius stretches the geographical significations beyond a narrowly delimited region in the far South to an expansive east-west trajectory.

This point is firmly established in his geographical-onomastic digression on “the Arabs and Saba.” Eusebius latches onto the important difference between the Septuagint and other translators over the term “Arabs.” What is translated as Arabs by the LXX is merely transliterated from the Hebrew by Aquila and Symmachus. I offer the digression *in extenso* because it is a fascinating example of Eusebius’s exegetical maneuvering.

Aquila, Symmachus, and the Hebrew Scriptures in agreement with them, say “kings of Saba and Saba,” so that the name uttered is the same, but there is a change in the difference of [Hebrew] letters; for the first “Saba” is conveyed through what is called by the Hebrews *sen* [“s(h)in”], but the second through the letter “sadē” according to the Hebrew Scripture; whence also our manner of interpretation is changed by them. The Savior mentions this name [i.e., the first Saba], saying: “The queen of Saba will stand up on the day of judgment. . . .” (Luke 11.31), presenting clearly that the nation (ἔθνος) of Saba is on the limits of the earth. And the third book of Kings records this about the same nation, “the Queen of Saba heard of the name of Solomon. . . .” (3 Kings 10.1–2). Both the land and the nation of Saba are named from Saba her forefather, who is recorded to have been the son of Cush. Therefore, the writings of Moses say: “The sons of Cush [were] Saba and Hevila and Sabatha” (Gen. 10.7). And Cush means “the Ethiopian.” So it seems that the nation of Saba is an Ethiopic race. And a second Saba is mentioned, about which Scripture says: “The sons of Regma [were] Saba (= Sheba) and Dadan” (Gen. 10.7).⁹³

⁹² Eusebius, *Comm. Ps.* 71.9–11 (PG 23:808AB): Καὶ ἐντούτοις δὲ ὁ λόγος, διελὼν εἰς δύο μέρη τὴν οἰκουμένην, τὸ μὲν ἀφορίζει ἐπὶ τὸ πρὸς δυσμαῖς ἡλίου κλίμα, ὃ δὴ πρῶτον παρίστησιν εἰπών· Βασιλεῖς Θαρσεῖς καὶ νῆσοι δῶρα προσοίσουσιν· δι’ ὧν τὴν πρὸς δυσμαῖς σημαίνει θάλασσαν καὶ τὰς ἐν ταύτῃ νήσους. . . . Ἐν δὲ τῷ Ἐξεκλήλ τοῦ Θαρσεῖς ὀνόματος φερομένου, οἱ Ἑβδομήκοντα Καρχηδόνα ἡρμήνευσαν. Τὸ δὲ ἕτερον κλίμα τὸ πρὸς ἀνατολὰς ἡλίου δηλοῦται διὰ τοῦ, Βασιλεῖς Ἀράβων καὶ Σαβά. Τό τε γὰρ τῶν Ἀράβων γένος ἀνατολικὸν τυγχάνει, ἐπέκεινα δὲ αὐτοῦ τὰ Περσικὰ μέρη, καὶ ἡ τῶν Σαβαιτῶν χώρα εἶναι λέγεται.

⁹³ Eusebius, *Comm. Ps.* 71.9–11 (PG 23:808B–D): ὁ Ἀκύλας καὶ ὁ Σύμμαχος, ἥ τε Ἑβραϊκὴ γραφὴ συντόνως τούτοις, Βασιλεῖς Σαβὰ καὶ Σαβὰ εἰρήκασιν. “Ὡστ’ εἶναι ταυτον μὲν ἐκφωνούμενον ὄνομα, διαλλάττειν δὲ τῇ τῶν στοιχείων διαφορᾷ· τὸ μὲν γὰρ πρῶτον Σαβὰ διὰ τοῦ καλουμένου

Eusebius's concern centers upon an effort to spread the geographical markers of this verse as far as possible. The first Saba refers to the region of Arabia (where Sheba was from), while the second Saba denotes regions farther to the East. His remarks on the Hebrew terms, confused though they may be (Saba in Hebrew begins with a samech not tzadi [or, sadē as Eusebius has it]),⁹⁴ seek to solidify his broadening, geographically expansive interpretation, rooting them in a more ancient history recorded in the scriptures and ultimately going all the way back to Cush, the original Ethiopian.

His encyclopedic-style notes develop a master vision of ancient Ethiopia and its relation to other distant nations, which marked the sort of formulation of a comprehensive meta-narrative that was integral to dominant Christian discourse of the post-Constantinian world. The fact that he bungles the Hebrew, and even then he is only able to substantiate the connection of Saba with Ethiopia (not with regions of the further East), does not obviate his ability to produce a scholarly and exegetically complex way to talk about biblical Ethiopians and others. He categorizes and defines the Ethiopian's interpretive possibilities and their usefulness as tropes of Christian identity. What moderns might characterize as sophistry represents the efforts of one who stood at the forefront of the production of Christian ethnographical and geographical knowledge in late antiquity.

Eusebius's comments on these verses from Psalm 71 conclude with the additional broadening of interpretive vision to include cosmic and spiritual realms as well.

But the prophecy indicates that the kingdoms in the western climate and those toward the setting of the sun will bring gifts to the One prophesied, and so perhaps the nations are indicated by "the kingdoms." And are the angels presiding over nations never called kings when they do sacred service to God and lead the

παρ' Ἑβραίοις σέν, τὸ δὲ δεύτερον διὰ τοῦ σάδη στοιχείου κατὰ τὴν Ἑβραϊκὴν ἐμφέρεται γραφὴν· ἔνθεν καὶ τὰ τῆς ἐρμηνείας αὐτοῖς ἐναλλάττει. Καὶ ὁ Σωτὴρ δὲ τούτου μέμνηται τοῦ ὀνόματος λέγων· Βασιλίσσα Σαβὰ ἀναστήσεται ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως . . . σαφῶς παριστὰς ὡς ἐν τοῖς πέρασιν τῆς γῆς τὸ Σαβὰ ἔθνος τυγχάνει. Ἰστορεῖ δὲ καὶ ἡ τρίτη τῶν Βασιλειῶν περὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἔθνους ταῦτα· Καὶ βασιλίσσα Σαβὰ ἤκουσε τὸ ὄνομα Σολομῶντος . . . Κέκλητο δὲ ἡ χώρα καὶ τὸ ἔθνος Σαβὰ ἀπὸ προπάτορος τοῦ Σαβὰ, ὃς ἀναγέγραπται υἱὸς γεγονῶς τοῦ Χοῦς. Λέγει δ' οὖν ἡ Μωυσέως γραφὴ· Υἱοὶ δὲ Χοῦς, Σαβὰ καὶ Εὐίλα, καὶ Σαβάθα. Χοῦς δὲ ἐρμηνεύεται ὁ Αἰθίοψ. Γένος οὖν Αἰθιοπικὸν ἔοικεν εἶναι τὸ Σαβὰ ἔθνος. Καὶ δεύτερον δὲ εἴρηται Σαβὰ, περὶ οὗ φησιν ἡ Γραφή· Υἱοὶ δὲ Ῥεγμάς, Σαβὰ καὶ Δαδάν.

⁹⁴The Greek sigma could transliterate the Hebrew *šin*, *sín*, and *sameh*, while a tau and sigma (or zeta) transliterated the Hebrew *šadi*. For Eusebius's knowledge of Hebrew, see the brief comments of Eberhard Nestle, "Alttestamentliches aus Eusebius," ZAW 29 (1909) 57–58; Hollerich, *Eusebius of Caesarea's Commentary on Isaiah*, 81–85 (who offers a minimalist view of Eusebius's Hebrew skills); Jörg Ulrich, *Euseb von Caesarea und die Juden. Studien zur Rolle der Juden in der Theologie des Eusebius von Casarea* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1999) 192–201 (who cautiously puts forth a more positive assessment than Hollerich). For Ulrich, Eusebius had "some competence" in Hebrew. However Ulrich's position is far from solid, as he himself recognizes. But the examples he adduces come mostly from the *DE*—as well as other material from the *Proph. Ecl.* and *Comm. Ps.*, such as the present passage—and must be given sufficient weight in any future evaluations of Eusebius's knowledge of Hebrew.

churches, which are of the nations they rule, as gifts to Him? . . . The angels are the kings, invisible and unseen rulers of nations . . . they bring the souls under them as gifts. This will be fulfilled when the fullness of nations has entered, and especially at the second theophany of our Savior.⁹⁵

Even in this spiritualized interpretation of the “kings” in Psalm 71, Eusebius persists in reading the “kingdoms” at a nation-historical level, as prophetic of historical events that will be fulfilled after the appearance of Christ; that is, it represents the rapid and sweeping expansion of Christianity throughout the nations of the world. The psalmist’s Ethiopians signified the Christians of remote geographical regions—not souls blackened by sin—who would be given as gifts by the angels of nations.

Food to the Ethiopian peoples (Comm. Ps. 73:14)

We saw that Origen presented the reader of his *De oratione* with a thoroughly allegorical understanding of Ps 73:14 in his discussion of those who partake of the supersubstantial nourishment of the Logos and those who fed upon the serpent. Eusebius’s treatment of this verse shows a marked attempt to distance himself from such allegorical readings of biblical Ethiopians. Without naming Origen, Eusebius’s allusions to Origen’s discussion are, however, clear.

But figuratively (τροπικῶς), someone falling upon these passages will refer these things to invisible and unseen powers, saying that they are those called serpents; and figuratively the sea is their dwelling place and the ruler himself of the wicked spirits is signified through the many-headed serpent; about which someone might say it is spoken, “You crushed the heads of the serpent, you gave it as food to the Ethiopian peoples.” Such a person will ask also who the Ethiopians are by the laws of allegory, saying that they are blackened souls. They also, he will say, eat the aforementioned serpent, in a way similar (ἀναλόγως) to those eating the flesh of the saving Logos. And in accordance with this, he will attempt to explain figuratively also the springs broken into swollen rivers and the rivers having been dried up. But we have explained the meaning (διάνοιαν) according to the literal sense (πρὸς λέξιν).⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Eusebius, *Comm. Ps.* 71.9–11 (PG 23:808D–809A): Πλὴν ἀλλὰ σημαίνει ἡ προφητεία διὰ τούτων τὰς κατὰ τὸ ἀνατολικὸν κλίμα βασιλείας καὶ τὰς πρὸς δυσμὰς ἡλίου δῶρα τῷ θεοπιζομένῳ προσοίσειν, οὕτω πως σημαιομένων τῶν ὑπὸ τὰς βασιλείας ἐθνῶν. Μήποτε δὲ καὶ βασιλεῖς οἱ τῶν ἐθνῶν προεστῶτες ἄγγελοι δηλοῦνται ἱερωμένοι τῷ Θεῷ καὶ δῶρα προσάγοντες αὐτῷ τὰς Ἐκκλησίας ὧν κατηγοῦνται ἐθνῶν; . . . Οὗτοι δὴ τὰ οἱ βασιλεῖς, ἀφανεῖς καὶ ἀόρατοι τῶν ἐθνῶν ἄρχοντες, προσκυνήσαντες τὸν ἑαυτῶν Κύριον, τὰς ὑπ’ αὐτοῖς ψυχὰς δῶρα προσήγον αὐτῷ . . . Ὁ δὲ καὶ πεπεῖσθαι χρὴ πληρωθῆσθαι, ὅτ’ ἂν τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰσέλθῃ, καὶ μάλιστα κατὰ τὴν δευτέραν τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοφάνειαν. Though not known for his eschatological thought, such notions are not absent from his thinking; see Frank S. Thielman, “Another Look at the Eschatology of Eusebius,” *VC* 41 (1987) 226–237.

⁹⁶ Eusebius, *Comm. Ps.* 73.12–18 (PG 23:864AB): Τροπικῶς δ’ ἂν τις ἐπιβαλὼν τοῖς τόποις ἀνοίσει ταῦτα ἐπὶ δυνάμεις ἀφανεῖς καὶ ἀόρατους, αὐτὰς εἶναι λέγων τοὺς δράκοντας τοὺς ἐνταῦθα ὀνομασμένους· θάλασσαν τε τροπικῶς τὸ τούτων οἰκητήριον, αὐτόν τε τὸν ἄρχοντα τῶν πονηρῶν πνευμάτων σημαίνεσθαι διὰ τοῦ πολυκεφάλου δράκοντος· περὶ οὗ φήσεί τις εἰρήσθαι

Though Origen is not named, Eusebius makes clear the identification of “such a person” by his description of the interpretation of Ethiopians as blackened souls, and by his contrast between the food of the serpent and that of the saving Logos.⁹⁷ Eusebius spends little time seriously engaging with Origen’s allegorical reading. Instead he dismisses it in a single sentence and reasserts the literal interpretation he offered just previous to his summation of Origen’s interpretation.

Eusebius’s own interpretation had been consistently historical, although not in a prophetic-historical manner as we saw in other passages referring to Ethiopians (where the historical referent lies in the psalmist’s future), but he recalled, rather, the historical past antedating the psalmist’s writing. In this case, the verse “you defeated the sea with your power,” indicated the marvelous works God performed long ago, beforehand: “it seems to me that he designates historically (πρὸς τὴν ἱστορίαν) the crossing of the people through the Red Sea.”⁹⁸ The psalm’s “heads of the serpent” were symbols for the Egyptians and Pharaoh,⁹⁹ and of the Ethiopians’ serpentine food it might be said that, “their dead bodies, having been cast out of the sea, became food to the birds of the air.”¹⁰⁰

Eusebius does not expound upon this last point since he considers the connection with the historical event of the Egyptians drowning in the Red Sea to be clear. But in fact, Eusebius’s interpretation briefly left history behind on the particular issue of Ethiopian food. While he only writes, “someone might say”¹⁰¹ that the verse refers to birds eating the corpses of the drowned Egyptians, Eusebius offers no historical alternative. Ethiopians remain, then, figures for the birds. We do find, however, a more historical explanation later in the commentary of Theodoret. When Pharaoh’s army drowned in the Red Sea, Theodoret claims, the Ethiopians were able to invade and “eat up” the Egyptians.¹⁰²

τὸ, Σὺ συνέθλασας τὰς κεφαλὰς τοῦ δράκοντος, ἔδωκας αὐτὸν βρῶμα λαοῖς τοῖς Αἰθίοψι. Ζητήσῃ δὲ ὁ τοιοῦτος καὶ τινὰς Αἰθίοπας νόμοις ἀλληγορίας, τοὺς τὰς ψυχὰς μεμελανωμένους φάσκων εἶναι· οὓς δὲ καὶ ἐσθίειν ἐρεῖ τὸν προλεχθέντα δράκοντα. ἀναλόγως τοῖς ἐσθίουσι τοῦ σωτηρίου Λόγου τὰς σάρκας· ἀκολούθως δὲ τούτοις καὶ πηγὰς ῥηγνυμένας εἰς χειμάρρους καὶ ποταμοὺς ἀποξηραίνονμένους τροπικῶς ἀποδοῦναι πειράσεται. Ἄλλ’ ἡμεῖς, πρὸς λέξιν τὴν διάνοιαν ἀποδεδοκότες . . .

⁹⁷ Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 103, contrasts Eusebius’s reading here with Origen’s *Comm. Matt.* fr. 140 (GCS 41.71).

⁹⁸ Eusebius, *Comm. Ps.* 73.12–18 (PG 23:861C): Καὶ μοι δοκεῖ διὰ τούτων ὡς πρὸς τὴν ἱστορίαν σημαίνειν τὴν ἐπὶ Μωσέως γενομένην διόδον τοῦ λαοῦ διὰ τῆς Ἐρυθρᾶς θαλάσσης.

⁹⁹ Theodoret follows Eusebius on this point. Theodoret, *Comm. Ps.* 73.13–14 (PG 80:1460C).

¹⁰⁰ Eusebius, *Comm. Ps.* 73.12–18 (PG 23:861D): εἶποι ἂν τις τὰ νεκρὰ σώματα αὐτῶν, ἐκβρασθέντα τῆς θαλάσσης, βορὰν γεγονέναι τοῖς πετεινοῖς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. There may be an allusion here to the mythical account of the transformation of Memnon’s Ethiopian troops into birds after their leader’s death; see Quintus of Smyrna *Posthom.* 2.642–650. Eusebius seems to be followed here only by Pseudo-Athanasius, *Expos. in Psalm.* 73.14 (PG 27:336D).

¹⁰¹ See Curti, *Eusebiana, I: Commentarii in Psalmos*, 210.

¹⁰² Theodoret, *Comm. Ps.* 73.13–14 (PG 80:1461A); later, he will allow for an allegorical interpretation of the Ethiopians as blackened souls; see *ibid* (PG 80:1464A).

Important for the present discussion is that Eusebius rejected Origen's application of allegory to the Ethiopians in this passage. The later commentator pushed so far away from the allegorizing approach that he attributes it to the past history of the Jewish nation. Eusebius's discussion of Ethiopians here marks the singular instance where he adopted an interpretation that did not lend itself to his dominant "Church of the nations" triumphalism. What this shows is that Eusebius's conceptualization of Ethiopians as representative of the inclusion of even remote nations in the Church was not so narrowly focused that it neglected a careful historical reading of the psalms when it seemed necessary. At the same time, what remains consistent with his previous readings of the psalmist's Ethiopians is his repeatedly positive rendering of Ethiopian identity.

The Ethiopians and the Calling of the Nations (Comm. Ps. 86:4)

The final discussion in Eusebius's *Comm. Ps.* that is relevant for our inquiry into the interpretive troping of biblical Ethiopians shows more clearly his framework for conceiving Ethiopian identity. Here the psalmist links the Ethiopian people (λαός) with a series of otherwise disreputable figures: Rahab, Babylon, foreigners (ἄλλοφύλοι) and Tyre. All of these figures, Eusebius asserts, stand as symbols for "the calling of the nations," and it represents those "who have changed and converted from their former way of life (ἀγωγής), being deemed worthy of a second birth in the city of God; these ones the Word wants to remind of their former birth (γένους). . . . What else is this than the second birth of the foreign nations in the city of God?"¹⁰³

Origen saw the Ethiopian (at least the bride of the Song of Songs) as symbolic of those of ignoble birth, those who could not claim the highly esteemed heritage of the Jews. Yet they were nonetheless included in the Church because of their beauty in the image of God. To a degree, Eusebius follows this line of interpretation. Eusebius's Ethiopians, as well as the others enumerated with them, represented people of dubious racial and spiritual backgrounds: they were born among foreign nations. In spite of such limitations, they were granted participation in the calling of the nations. By recalling the ethnicities of their former birth, the psalmist both reminded them of their former birth, their ignoble lineage, while at the same time highlighting their new status within the Church; that is, their second birth into a new city and people. It is here that Eusebius diverges from Origen's interpretation, which had focused on the individual soul once alienated from God but since accepted as the bride of Christ. For Eusebius, the new birth marks rejection of one's former

¹⁰³ Eusebius, *Comm. Ps.* 86.4 (PG 23:1048A): Ἦγοῦμαι δὲ διὰ Βαβυλῶνος καὶ Τύρου καὶ Ῥαάβ, διὰ τε τῶν ἄλλοφύλων καὶ τοῦ λαοῦ τῶν Αἰθιοπῶν, τὴν κλῆσιν τῶν ἐθνῶν αἰνίττεσθαι, τῶν μεταθεμένων καὶ μεταβεβλημένων ἀπὸ τῆς προτέρας ἀγωγῆς, καταξιωθέντων τε ἀναγεννήσεως τῆς ἐν τῇ πόλει τοῦ Θεοῦ· οὗς ὁ Λόγος ἀναμνησκεῖν βούλεται τοῦ προτέρου ἑαυτῶν γένους . . . τί ἔτερον ἢ τῶν ἄλλοφύλων ἐθνῶν τὴν ἐν τῇ πόλει τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀναγέννησιν;

identity and the adoption of a new one, through a new birth into a new people. It was a social, communal, and indeed, a racial move on the part of the convert.¹⁰⁴

The swift and universal spread of Christianity among all the nations fulfilled the psalmist's prophetic words. "These things," he writes, "having been fulfilled in deeds, confirm the truth of the words of the salvific grace, even with respect to the Babylonians and the Tyrians, and all the foreign-born and those alien from the Israelitic race (γένους), both through the washing of regeneration and through the mysteries of the second birth of the new covenant in the aforementioned city of God."¹⁰⁵ Eusebius triumphantly finds prophetic fulfillment of the psalm in the glorious expansion of the city of God on earth, and in the actual course of real historical events. Eusebius's historicizing and racializing exposition subsumed the spiritual focus of Origen's interpretation. The former's world-historical vision turned its focus away from Origen's emphatic centering of Ethiopian identity within the marker of skin color and shifted attention to their geographically remote habitation at the ends of the earth. In their radical alterity, Eusebius found an interpretive locus of triumphalism for his historical conception of the far-reaching "calling of the nations."

■ Conclusion

The Ethiopians of the Hebrew scriptures would continue to play a significant role in the exegetical imagination of Christian thinkers. While the allegorical lines laid down by Origen seem to dominate the portrayal of biblical Ethiopians in Christian literature of the late antique period, Eusebius furnishes a welcome respite from the increasingly negative interpretations we find among both Greek and Latin Christian commentators. Consistently subsumed within his triumphalistic and world-historical interpretive schema, Eusebius's Ethiopians marked the vast and rapid expansion of evangelic teaching and the Christian way of life. Analysis of Origen's and Eusebius's treatment of the Ethiopians highlights the distinction between their respective frameworks, and it calls attention to their different theological and ecclesiological aims. The Ethiopians, "furthest away of men" at the earth's very edges, functioned as a floating signifier and a powerful trope that was ripe for manipulation in conceptualizing either the soul or the Church.

¹⁰⁴ Buell, *Race*, 138–65; Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument*, 198–233.

¹⁰⁵ Eusebius, *Comm. Ps.* 86.4 (PG 23:1048BC): Ἄ δὴ καὶ ἔργοις ἐπιτελεσθέντα τὴν τῶν λόγων ἀλήθειαν πιστοῦται τῆς σωτηρίου χάριτος, καὶ Βαβυλωνίου, καὶ Τυρίου, καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀλλογενεῖς καὶ ἀλλοτρίους τοῦ γένους τοῦ Ἰσραηλιτικοῦ, καὶ διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας, καὶ τῶν τῆς Καινῆς Διαθήκης μυστηρίων ἀναγεννώσης ἐν τῇ δηλωθείσῃ πόλει τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Monarchianism and Photinus of Sirmium as the Persistent Heretical Face of the Fourth Century*

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The *Psychomachia* of the fifth-century Latin poet Prudentius provides a straightforward portrait of heresy generally shared in the west:

The wolf, with gory jaws, conceals himself in a soft fleece,
Counterfeiting milk-white sheep while carrying on bloody murders
by devouring lambs.
It is by this means that Photinus and Arrius disguise themselves,
those wolves so wild and savage.¹

Each for its own reasons, Photinian and Arian theologies claimed that Christ as incarnate deity possessed necessary limitations, lest the divine be corrupted and mitigated by a human ontology. It was not surprising therefore that late-fourth-century versions of “Arianism” and monarchianism were often thrown together as essentially sharing the same heretical goals. In particular, the monarchial theology of Photinus became identified as among the chief heresies of the west. It seems that the leading criticism of Photinus was that he maintained the Son did not exist until his incarnation at Bethlehem. Zeno of Verona (c. 362–380) accused Photinus of teaching that “Jesus Christ assumed his beginning (*principium*) from the womb of the virgin Mary, and was made, not born, God, on account of his righteousness.”² In the earliest Latin handbook of heresy, “Fotinus” was highlighted as a heretic because “he denied

* Let me express my thanks to Prof. Joseph Lienhard who read an early draft and offered helpful criticisms.

¹ Prudentius, *Psychomachia* 793–95 (LCL 15:188).

² Zeno, *Tractatus* 2.8 (CCSL 22:177.37–38).

that Christ is God with the Father before the ages."³ It was suggested that Photinus should more appropriately be named "Scotinus" since the promise of "illumination" for the church had brought only a darkness of "obscurity."⁴

By the late 340s, Photinus's teaching had come to be *the* demonstration of monarchianism in the west. There certainly were other proponents of adoptionist christology in the fourth century, but none that are remembered so infamously.⁵ Thanks to conciliar condemnations, especially like those expressed at the council of Sirmium in 351, Photinus and Marcellus of Ancyra had also acquired the *personae* of heretical extremism opposite to the errors of "Arianism." This is precisely the means by which the fourth *Oration* of Pseudo-Athanasius and various western writers (Hilary of Poitiers, Phoebadius of Agen, Eusebius of Vercelli, Ambrose of Milan) navigated their way through the murky waters of finding a christology that was neither hierarchical subordinationist nor unitarian monarchian. The process itself contributed to the shaping of doctrine; that is, the varied forms of "Arianism" and monarchianism helped define or "map" the contour that contributed to the identity of pro-Nicene theology in the second half of the fourth century. Much attention has been given the "Arian" side of this process, but little to the monarchian contribution, even though the latter stood closer confessionally to the Nicene position.⁶ Given that monarchianism and Photinianism suffered the fate of becoming classified as heretical movements, very little reliable evidence remains that we can draw upon for their reconstruction.

By the end of the fourth century, adoptionist monarchian theology in the form of Photinianism had come to be a stunted thing, summed up in pithy christological

³ Filastrius, *Diversarum haereseon liber* 91.2 (CSEL 9:257). See Eusebius of Vercelli, *De trinitate* 3.47 (CCSL 9:42): "Interrogabo et te, Fotine, qui Christum verum deum abnegas et hominem purum tantummodo confiteris . . .?"

⁴ Lucifer of Calgari, *De non parcendo in deum delinquentibus* 28 (CCSL 8:250).

⁵ Doctrinal historians will know that Tertullian was the first to coin the name "Monarchians" (*Adversus Praxean* 10.2 [PL 164D]) to describe his opponents, claiming: "God himself made himself a Son to himself." While the term "Monarchian" could be applied to any Christian, it came to characterize several theological strains all of which stressed the essential and inviolable unity of the divine being. The *monarchia* of God as the divine substance could not be fractured or divided into three, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. While the fragmented state of the patristic evidence prevents a nuanced understanding of the different strains, one can identify (from its opponents) what is called "modalist" monarchianism, also known to the ancients as patripassionism (the Father who suffers). This position protects the singularity of God by regarding the Trinity as three modes or manifestations of the one and same divine essence. Another strain is called "adoptionist" or "dynamic" monarchianism, which preserved divine unity in the Father whose spirit came upon the Son at some point after his human birth. The divinized human being or Christ regressed to his previous human state when the divine spirit abandoned his body on the cross. Yet a third strain, or perhaps another expression of modalism, emphasizes the outward movement of God's one substance in history for the purposes of creation and recreation and vivifying, whereafter the divine being contracts or withdraws into its original singularity.

⁶ While the importance of Marcellus of Ancyra to the doctrinal dynamics of the council of Nicaea and its aftermath have been recognized, the same cannot be said of the influence of adoptionist theologies in the west.

statements about the Son having his beginning from Mary. This theology had become narrowed down through the machinations of a handful of polemicists. I will, however, return to some further implications of this characterization toward the end of this essay. But later fifth and sixth century characterizations of Photinus created the impression that the views associated with Photinus had minor significance to the evolution of doctrine in the west, a view that patristic scholarship has more or less accepted as accurate. In the following pages, I would like to show that a more balanced perspective is warranted for the reason that it reveals 1) that Photinus was more than a heretical "straw man" who needed to be knocked down; and 2) that the ultimate hegemony of pro-Nicene theology was contingent upon its proving the dissimilarity between itself and monarchianism. This means that there had to be a deliberate and sustained confrontation with the monarchian trajectory that had been latent within pro-Nicene theology.

There is no doubt that the opposition Photinus stirred in the west was an oblique response to similar concerns voiced in the east over the doctrine of Marcellus of Ancyra, although such an explanation does not fully account for the evidence that suggests that subdued yet persistent monarchian theologies continued into the fourth century. The paucity of extant evidence makes linking this theology concretely between the third and fourth centuries uncertain. It is unfortunate that we know so little about Paul of Samosata's theology,⁷ and Eusebius of Caesarea's account of the moral turpitude of the adoptionist monarchians in the third century is not helpful. The only theological information, although lacking any detailed depth, was that Artemon and Theodotus taught that Christ was merely human.⁸

⁷ For a critical review of the evidence see Frederick Norris, "Paul of Samosata: Procurator Ducenarius," *JTS* 35 (1984) 50–70. One wonders if Paul's theology, as presented by Epiphanius, was largely modeled on Photinus when the latter is said to have taught that the Son was "not a subsistent entity but is in God himself," (*Panarion* 65.6.1 [*The Panarion of St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis* (trans. P. R. Amidon; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990)]); that the Son was not begotten (65.3.2); that Jesus was a human being and was inspired by the divine Logos (65.7.3); that the model of the Son's incarnation was a psychological one: "that the Logos is like that in the human heart, and wisdom like that prudence in the human soul which every person has acquired from God" (65.3.4).

⁸ Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.28. The work attributed to Hippolytus, *Adversus Noetum*, distinguishes a certain Theodotus and those like him from the patripassionists who make use of the scriptural passages "to prove that Christ was a mere man." Later Hippolytus says, "There was a certain Theodotus, a native of Byzantium, who introduced a novel heresy. He announces tenets concerning the originating cause of the universe, which are partly in keeping with the doctrines of the true Church, in so far as he acknowledges that all things were created by God. . . . he alleges that (our Lord) appeared in some such manner as I shall now describe. According to this, Theodotus maintains that Jesus was a (mere) man, born of a virgin, according to the counsel of the Father, and that after he had lived promiscuously with all men, and had become preeminently religious, he subsequently at his baptism in Jordan received Christ, who came from above and descended (upon him) in the form of a dove. And this was the reason, (according to Theodotus) why (miraculous) powers did not operate within him prior to the manifestation in him of that Spirit which descended (and) which proclaims him to be the Christ. But (among the followers of Theodotus) some are disposed (to think) that never was

There are reports indicating that “Monarchianism” (mainly of the modalist variety) enjoyed popularity among some third-century Montanists in Rome, and perhaps earlier.⁹ It is not anachronistic to imagine that Montanus himself had modalist-like sympathies¹⁰ given that the New Prophecy flourished in or near Pepouza (just south of present-day Usak, near the Ulubey canyon)¹¹ in western central Turkey. Monarchial views were attributed to Praxeas and Noetus who came from Smyrna as well as Theodotus (“the cobbler”) who came from Byzantium. Interestingly, one of Hippolytus’s charges against the “Phrygians” was that they entertained similar notions to Noetus of Smyrna. Although embraced by many in Rome, the latter was refuted on account of his teaching that there is one Father and God, and that this God is also called by the name of the Son, and that in substance he is one Spirit.¹² While it is possible that Hippolytus’s association of Noetus with Montanism was a calculated slur, we can also reasonably postulate an indirect theological similarity between the two.

There were several unformed and diverse doctrines about God in the late second and early third centuries. We may recall the one theologically focused moment in the *Shepherd of Hermas* (c. 120) in which the author interprets the parable of the vineyard as God creating the world (e.g., the field), with the son of the owner being the Holy Spirit, and the servant being the Son of God. It is the Holy Spirit who is later said to have lived in the flesh and served the Spirit well (*Similitude* 5–6). That the *Shepherd* was read as a scriptural text in many churches indicates that its assertions of “Spirit-christology” were considered normative despite the ambiguities. But before they were categorized as elements alien to Christian orthodoxy, modalist and adoptionist forms of monarchianism were present in Rome by the time of the episcopates of Victor (189?–198) and Zephyrinus (198–217), and probably earlier. The unknown Roman author of an anti-adoptionist work entitled *The Little*

this man made God (even) at the descent of the Spirit; whereas others (maintain that he was made God) after the resurrection from the dead” (*Adversus Noetum* 3.5.224).

⁹ Pseudo-Tertullian, *Adversus omnes haereses* 7 (21; CSEL 47:225); *ANF* 3.654.

¹⁰ A logion attributed to Montanus, “I am the Word, the Bridegroom, the Paraclete, the Omnipotent One, I am All Things” (*fragment apud* Theodore of Heraclea-Perinthus in *Dialogo tra un montanista e un ortodosso* [Berruto Martone and Anna Maria, eds.; Bologna: Ed. Dehoniane, 1999; 99], seems modalist in character. As does “For Montanus alleges he said: ‘I am the Father and the Son and the Paraclete’” (Ps.-[?] Mont., *fr. ap.* Ps.-[?] Didymus, *De trinitate* 3.41.1 [PG 39: 983B]). Given the Trinitarian content of this logion, it may have been composed (perhaps from elements of genuine formulaic *logia* uttered by Montanus) by a later anti-Montanist polemicist in the context of the controversies surrounding Modalism. Whereas critics have accused Montanus of arrogantly presuming to speak as the Father or the Spirit (see the reputed logion in Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.11.9), it is likely that the prophet was claiming divine inspiration, uttering in the Spirit who spoke as the Father.

¹¹ See William Tabbernee, “Portals of the Montanist New Jerusalem: The Discovery of Pepouza and Tymion,” *JECS* 11 (2003) 87–93.

¹² Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium* 10.22–23 (GCS 26). The authorship of this work is debated but for purposes of this essay I will attribute it to Hippolytus.

Labyrinth,¹³ writing at the end of the second or the beginning of the third century, tells of his frustration with the tenacity of monarchian views among the clergy;¹⁴ Hippolytus complained about the same thing roughly a generation later.¹⁵ This state of affairs would confirm that Tertullian's attempt to depict Praxeas as an isolated heretic was special pleading on his part. He begrudgingly admits that Praxeas's views were indeed prospering in Carthage, and most noteworthy among those Christians whom Tertullian scornfully calls the *simplices*.¹⁶ With some variation then, monarchian theology was flourishing in the west. And while the evidence does not warrant the claim that the "mainstream" tradition of pre-Nicene churches were mainly monarchian,¹⁷ it was, nonetheless, a major strain within proto-orthodoxy.

It is no surprise, therefore, that forms of monarchian theology endured into the fourth century. Proponents of Photinian theology continued to be active in the west long after the bishop's condemnation and deposition in 351, as evidenced by the proscriptions of Photinians (along with Arians, Donatists and Manichaeans) under emperors Constantius II,¹⁸ Gratian,¹⁹ and Theodosius throughout the later fourth century.²⁰ These repeated proscriptions suggest that the theological emphases

¹³ The few fragments against the adoptionism of Artemon that are preserved anonymously only in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.28.1–19, have been ascribed to Gaius of Rome (the same author of an anti-Montanist dialogue against Proclus, cited in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.25.6–7; 3.31.4; 6.20.3) by the Byzantine cataloguer Photius. Jerome does place Gaius at the time of Zephyrinus (*De viris illustribus* 59 [PL 23:669B]), but no patristic historian connects this work to Gaius and it may just as likely have been written by Hippolytus or an unknown contemporary familiar with the doctrinal situation in Rome.

¹⁴ Roman monarchians declared that both Victor and Zephyrinus had been swayed by their logic, though *The Little Labyrinth* disputes this claim on the grounds that Victor condemned Theodotus "the Cobbler," who presumably taught the same views as Artemon (*Fr. ap. Eusebius, Hist. eccl.* 5.28.6).

¹⁵ However, Hippolytus accused Zephyrinus of supporting monarchianism under the influence of his archdeacon and later successor, Callistus (*Refut.* 9.11).

¹⁶ *Adversus Praxean* 3.1 in *Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas* (trans. E. Evans; London: SPCK, 1948) 91. Even though Tertullian combined his refutation of the monarchianism of Praxeas and the endorsement of Montanism, there is no need to assume that Montanism was fundamentally anti-modalistic. In fact, Tertullian sought to show in *Adversus Praxean* the implicit doctrinal significance of the Paraclete's prophecies and the *monarchia* of God in explicitly trinitarian terms of the economy. That Tertullian stresses how the two complimented each other, *contra* Praxeas's claims, may imply that theological distance had to be created between Montanism and monarchial modalism, at least as they existed in Carthage. This being said, we should not overstate the point by saying Montanism was the means by which monarchianism came to North Africa, rather, that the Montanism shared in the theological commerce and diversity of the late second and early third centuries, including Monarchianism.

¹⁷ As is the thesis of Reinhard M. Hübner, *Der paradox Eine. Antignostischer Monarchianismus im zweiten Jahrhundert* (VC Supp 50; Leiden: Brill, 1999).

¹⁸ As a result of the council of Sirmium (351).

¹⁹ 19 Jan. 379; 20 Aug. 379 (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 5.2; Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 7.1.3; *Theodosiani Libri XVI cum constitutionibus Simondianis* [CTh] 16.5.5 (ed. Theodor Mommsen and Paul M. Meyer; Berlin: Weidmann, 1905).

²⁰ CTh 16.5.6 (10 Jan. 381). General anti-heretical edicts were frequently issued under Theodosius, e.g., CTh 16.5.15, 19, 20, 24. Under Theodosius II, the Photinians are listed among the

represented in Photinianism had a broad appeal that was not easily stamped out. Among the extant correspondence attributed to the emperor Julian, there is one brief letter addressed to Photinus who is congratulated on having distinguished his faith from the “mistake of the base and ignorant creed-making fishermen.”²¹ Photinus is said to have done well by holding that a god can by no means be brought into the womb.²² Of course Julian was seeking to sow the seeds of dissension among Christian churches (by late 361 and early 362) by pitting variant confessional groups against one another.²³ We would expect a certain distortion or exaggeration of the facts. At the same time, the letter insinuates that the influence of Photinus, a metropolitan bishop of Pannonia,²⁴ was considerable enough that Julian’s strategy might be reasonably effective in that area. Indeed, support for Photinus was strong enough that Valentinian I had to order his expulsion from Sirmium in 375, which was nearly a quarter century after he had been deposed as the bishop of that city.²⁵ Six years later at the council of Aquileia (381), we find Ambrose seeking assistance from the emperor Gratian to enforce previous legislation against the Photinians who were still holding assemblies in Sirmium and elsewhere.²⁶ In that same year the first canon of the council of Constantinople included Photinians in its heretical condemnations. Such legal bans were notoriously ineffective in preventing heretical congregations from proliferating and it was no different in this case. In his own refutation of Photinus, Lucifer of Cagliari acidly observed (c. 360), “you’ve devoted written texts and established preachers in every place who are favorable

proscribed heretical groups (*CTh* 16.5.65) (30 May 428) and again *CTh*, Novels of Theodosius 3.9 (31 Jan. 438).

²¹ Ep. 55, *The Works of the Emperor Julian* (LCL 29:188): “degenerum et imperitorum eius theologorum errorem.”

²² Ibid., “Tu quidem, o Photine, versimilis videris and proxime salvari, benefaciens nequaquam in utero inducere quem credidisti deum.” The Pagan intellectual, Celsus, had echoed the same disdain for the Christians’ divine view of Jesus: “When they call him the Son of God, they are not really paying homage to God, rather, they are attempting to exalt Jesus to the heights.” *Celsus: On True Doctrine* (trans. R. J. Hoffmann; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) 43.

²³ There is no warrant to think that Photinus had been restored to the episcopacy of Sirmium under Julian as L. Speller proposed (“New Light of the Photinians: The Evidence of Ambrosiaster,” *JTS* 34 [1983] 101, 104). Germinius remained bishop of Sirmium until his death in c. 375/6. D. H. Williams, “Another Exception to Later Fourth Century ‘Arian’ Typologies: The Case of Germinius of Sirmium,” *JECS* 4 (1996) 335–57.

²⁴ Of Illyricum (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 2.18).

²⁵ Based on Jerome, *De viris illust.* 107 (PL 23:703B). Valentinian came into Illyricum in later 375, which is the time he would have likely been approached about continuing problems in Sirmium over Photinus. However, Valentinian was noted for involving himself as little as possible in theological affairs, and it is all but certain that his expulsion of Photinus was on the grounds of creating a civil disruption—a not uncommon means for emperors in the fourth century to treat dissident bishops whom they could not (or would not) otherwise touch.

²⁶ Ep. 2.12 (CSEL 82:3).

to your views.”²⁷ Throughout the next 150 years, Photinianism persisted in small pockets chiefly in the west and was called by several names.²⁸

■ Sources

Oppositional

Reminiscent of the problems associated with reconstructing the origins of Montanism, Photinus is also said to have written a number of works in Greek and Latin,²⁹ but none of these are extant and only vague echoes of his theology can be heard in subsequent condemnations of him.³⁰ The historian Socrates tells of a “creed” that Photinus espoused in Sirmium, which was presumably the church baptismal formula, although no trace of this remains.³¹ However, the sources most useful for determining Photinian belief are not found in the general histories or the heretical guidebooks of the fourth and fifth centuries, but they are found in the conciliar and theological literature contemporary to the bishop of Sirmium.

Partial critiques of Photinus are found in Hilary of Poitiers, Marius Victorinus, Lucifer of Cagliari, and the writer known as “Ambrosiaster.” In his Matthew commentary, Hilary shows that he was familiar first-hand with those who blaspheme the Spirit by denying “to Christ what is of God . . . since God is in Christ and Christ in God.”³² Presuming he wrote the commentary c. 350–53, Hilary may have been aware of the Sirmium council of 351. Regardless, it is plain from various passages of the text that he was familiar with an adoptionist theology at the time of Photinus and that it was something he believed posed a present threat to his western readers. It is this unnamed group who undermined the incarnation of the divine Word by claiming God could not be born in man and that Christ’s suffering must abrogate an eternal nature. On numerous occasions throughout the commentary, Hilary signals the error of those who are under the illusion that if Christ was a man he could not also be God.³³ At one point, Hilary also explains how this error leads them to conclude that the one who was born of Mary acquired God’s wisdom and power rather than being born *as* God’s power and wisdom:

²⁷ *De non parcendo in deum delinquentibus* 26.13–5: “et libros scriptos dedisti et praedicatores benigni uoti tui omni in loco constituisti” (CCSL 8:245).

²⁸ Gregory of Rome, *Ep.* 36; Council of Arles (late fifth century) where Photinians are also called Paulianists, or Bonosiacos (CCSL 148:117).

²⁹ Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 4.6.

³⁰ Jerome knew or had heard that Photinus had written a work called *Contra gentes* and a book addressed to the emperor Valentinian I (*De viris Illust.* 107; PL 23:703B).

³¹ Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 2.29.

³² See “the one through whom God came into man” *In Matthaeum* 5.15 (SC 254:168).

³³ Especially true in the first half of the commentary, see *In Matthaeum* 3.5: the temerity of the devil when he began to tempt Jesus was based on his erroneous conclusion that he was man only. The exegetical exercise of 3.1–5 is to show that Christ is the Lord God in a man. See 8.2; 8.6: “He

There are many who shun the apostolic dictum which says, "Christ is the power (*virtutem*) and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1: 24). In this manner, they are in the habit of saying that the wisdom and power of God had appeared efficaciously in him when he came forth from the virgin, such that it is in his nativity the work of divine wisdom and power is understood, and that there is in him the acquisition of wisdom rather than wisdom by nature.³⁴

According to the refutations of Marius Victorinus in *Adversus Arium*, the truth of the consubstantiality of the Father and Son is an argument against the "Arians" as well as the Photinians.³⁵ Of particular concern in Victorinus's polemic is the adoptionist theology of the Photinians, which he says makes Christ to be the Son not by nature.³⁶ Victorinus counters by observing that the divine Logos is the Son and Christ is the Son, which means Christ as Logos is equal to the Father. The problem was not that the Photinians failed to acknowledge the deity of the Son, but that the Son was a human vehicle through which divine power flowed. This was tantamount in Victorinus's mind that they denied the divine sonship of Christ.

In the non-compromising treatises of Lucifer of Cagliari, he too is chiefly concerned with "Arians" and opponents of Athanasius, but, like Victorinus, he maintains that the theological upshot of Photinus's teaching vitiated the divinity of the Son, much like the "Arians" who also denied the pre-existence of the Son's divine being: "You who are Arians or who is Photinus of Sirmium . . . believe Him to be a creature, of whom (*in eum*) 'who when he was, he once was not; of whom 'who he created from nothing.'"³⁷ The Nicene creed, according to Lucifer, was necessary against both of these heresies, and it is in this context that a Latin version of the creed is then quoted, with the concluding words, "You see that this is the apostolic and evangelical faith, that the Son always reigned with the Father,

who forgave, therefore, is God because no one forgives except God. Indeed, the Word of God which abides in the man offers to a man healing"; 9.8: "For never had they believed that God was in man, just as they rather laughed at the proceeding of the resurrection of the dead"; 12.11: "Although they [the Pharisees] were not able to attribute his works to a man, they refused to confess them of God, and claimed that all of his power against demons was from Beelzebub, the prince of demons"; 16.5: "The whole of the confession is that he had assumed a body and was made man, because just as eternity received a body of our nature, so it should be acknowledged that the nature of our body was able to assume the power of eternity"; 23.8: "Thus, the Pharisees should recall that in him who arose from David is contained the substance of the eternal power, authority and origin, and that God was going to reside in a man"; 31.2: "They want to attach neediness to [his] spirit because of the weakness of the body as if the taking of flesh (incarnation) in his helplessness corrupted that power of incorruptible substance and eternity was engulfed by a nature of fragility.

³⁴ Ibid., 11.10 (SC 254:264).

³⁵ Against those who claim Christ is made or born from nothing, Victorinus says this heresy is similar to the one that declares Christ began from Mary (*Adversus Arium* 2.2 [CSEL 83:1.170–71]).

³⁶ *Adversus Arrium* 1.10 (CSEL 83:1.66–67).

³⁷ *De non parcendo* 28.43–5 (CCSL 8:250): an awkward citation of the phrase, "qui fuerit quando non fuerit." See 18.13–5: "Otherwise there is a single mind of belief and unbelief among you since you say that there is no (*habere*). "God the true Son" (CCSL 8:229).

and upholds to rule, which acknowledges that He is a perfect divine Trinity and has one substance.”³⁸

Lydia Speller has drawn attention to commentaries of “Ambrosiaster” whose arguments reveal that certain Johannine and Pauline passages were important to Photinian exegesis.³⁹ Apparently, Photinians explained John 16:28 (“I came from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father”) as referring not to the person of Christ but to his teaching and *virtus*. Thus the *hypostasis* of the Son is one thing and his *virtus* is another—a division that Ambrosiaster utterly rejected.⁴⁰

Conciliar Activity

Much more could be said about the above writers relative to their opposition to Photinus. Nonetheless, the conciliar activity of the 340s and that of Sirmium in 351 provides the earliest and most direct data for determining the kind of monarchianism that led to Photinus’s final deposition and which laid the course for his *damnatio memoriae*. By retracing what are familiar steps to many doctrinal historians, we may find some fresh insights.

In the west, the 340s saw the rise of a number of initiatives addressing doctrinal matters. These were largely in response to the momentum begun at the council of Serdica (343).⁴¹ The aftermath of the western proceedings seems to have led to the uncovering—or acknowledgement—of monarchial interpretations of the divine substance. Despite their exoneration of Marcellus of Ancyra and the affirmation of God as μία ὑπόστασις, the western bishops, in a creed that was issued separately from the conciliar encyclical, rejected the notion that the Father ever existed without the Son, or that Christ has a beginning or an end, or that the Father is the Son or vice-versa.⁴² Since Marcellus had been absolved of any doctrinal guilt by the Roman bishop Julius and by western Serdica, the council could not have been directing its condemnations obliquely at him but rather against those unnamed persons who espoused such positions in reality.

³⁸ *De non parcendo* 18.15–29 (CCSL 8:229).

³⁹ For instance, the distinction between the first man who is earthly and the second, heavenly in 1 Cor 15:47 was apparently used by the Photinians as a proof text for showing that Adam came into existence before Christ. Ambrosiaster used Jn 3:31–32 and 16:6–30 attesting to Christ’s heavenly origins and that coming from the Father demonstrates his pre-incarnate existence.

⁴⁰ Speller, “New Light of the Photinians,” 106–7. The Photinian interpretation of the passage according to Ambrosiaster is: “doctrina quae venerat a deo, relicto mundo ad deum est regressa” (*Quaest. vet. et nov. test.* 91.2).

⁴¹ On the dating, see T. D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993) 71ff.

⁴² Following Stuart Hall’s enumeration: 1.1.2; 3.1 and 3.5. “The Creed of Sardica,” *Studia Patristica* 19 (1989) 175–77.

It was shortly after Serdica that Photinus became bishop of Sirmium.⁴³ Given the contemporary theological climate, it could not have helped him that he had reputed ties with Marcellus of Ancyra, whose dubious doctrinal reputation had later convinced Athanasius to separate himself from Marcellus (c. 345).⁴⁴ The actual or historical intersection between Marcellus and Photinus is obscured by the cacophony of later, and sometimes conflicting, reports from polemical sources. R. P. C. Hanson's assertion that "Photinus was a doctrinaire disciple of Marcellus"⁴⁵ is an exaggeration of what little we do know about the two. Hilary and Jerome identify Photinus as a deacon under Marcellus before coming to Sirmium, though neither say to what degree Photinus had drawn on the bishop's preaching.⁴⁶ The earliest conciliar statement we have about Photinus, the so-called Macrostich creed of 344, says only that Marcellus and "Scotinus" are disciples of Paul of Samosata because they taught "He was not Christ or Son of God or mediator or image of God before ages; but that He first became Christ and Son of God, when He took our flesh from the Virgin."⁴⁷

Such words seem to describe Photinus as possessing a theology that was motivated primarily by christological concerns—or at least this is what his opponents remembered as the most objectionable.⁴⁸ Marcellus's triadic unitarianism appears not to have included the bold adoptionism of Photinus. Indeed, Marcellus blatantly rejected "Sabellianism"⁴⁹ while insisting on the monotheistic character of orthodoxy. How far Photinus's views were indebted to Marcellus is impossible to tell apart from the discovery of a work from Photinus's hand. Some minor light is shed on the dynamic between the two from Hilary's fragmented narrative about the events surrounding Athanasius and Marcellus during and after Serdica. Here⁵⁰

⁴³ If the "Euterius a Pannonias" (*Collectanea Antiariana Parisina* B 2.4; fragmenta historica of Hilary of Poitiers [CSEL 65:137]) named among those bishops condemned by the westerners at Serdica refers to Sirmium, then Photinus is not bishop until sometime soon after 343. Accordingly, Epiphanius's placement of Photinus's condemnation at Serdica is surely a mistake (*Pan.* 71.1.1–2.4) for the events at Sirmium 351.

⁴⁴ CAP B 2.9.1. Assuming Athanasius wrote the third theological oration against the Arians in 345 and that it was, in part, against Photinus, it may serve as corroboration of Athanasius's split from Marcellus. Joseph T. Lienhard, "Did Athanasius Reject Marcellus?" in *Arianism After Arius: Essays on the Development of the Fourth Century Trinitarian Conflicts* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993) 74.

⁴⁵ *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988) 238. Also, that Photinus's views stem from Marcellus's early position, that is, before Marcellus moderated his views for the sake of his acceptance by Julius at Rome.

⁴⁶ Hilary, CAP B 2.5 (4); Jerome, *De vir. illust.* 107 (PL 23:703B).

⁴⁷ Athanasius, *De synodis* 26.5–6 (PG 26:730C; 731A).

⁴⁸ It is with respect to Photinus's christology that Augustine says he needed to learn how sharply it diverged from the catholic understanding of the Word that became flesh (*Conf.* 7.19.25).

⁴⁹ J. Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum: Marcellus of Ancyra and Fourth-Century Theology* (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 1999) 50. See 49–67 for a presentation of Marcellus's views from his own works.

⁵⁰ CAP B 2.9.1–3 (CSEL 65:146–47).

he insinuates that Marcellus made his own situation worse by recently writing a book “in which Marcellus saw fit to mix certain other points of novelty that hint vaguely at the path of doctrine on which Fotinus set out” (9. 1). Put in this way, it sounds as if Marcellus had formulated the basis on which Photinus realized his position. But in the same context Hilary notes how the content of Marcellus’s book (“which is now in our possession”) showed how “Fotinus took up the beginning of his perversities from his [Marcellus’s] lessons” (9. 3). Thus, we may tentatively conclude that whatever Photinus took from Marcellus’s teaching (e.g., preservation of monotheism with the Nicene creed), Photinus distinguished himself from his former bishop by espousing christological implications that led to his own unabashed form of monarchianism.

While we know more about Marcellus than we do of Photinus, the “success” in undermining their views lay in the blurring of distinctions that existed between Sabellius, Paul of Samosata, Photinus and Marcellus.⁵¹ Whereas Epiphanius says nothing (surprisingly) about the connection between Photinus and Marcellus, nor does Athanasius, nonetheless a group portrait of monarchial heretics, as it were, brought Marcellus and Photinus together in ways that obviated the peculiarities of each. After the 350s, the connection between Photinus and Marcellus begins to drop away as Photinus’s view and his disciples become a perceived threat *in ipsum* in the west.⁵²

Besides the link with Marcellus, it seems that Photinus had begun in the mid-340s to preach a theology which was one of the few issues both eastern and western bishops at Serdica agreed was worthy of condemnation. And yet we may assume Photinus won his new appointment by accepting *prima facie* the decisions of western Serdica, a point that must have worked in his favor when he was initially suspected of heresy. The close relation that Photinian views shared with a *mia-hypostatic* position made it seemingly compatible with early pro-Nicene theology, a point that clearly undermined those who advocated the innocence of Marcellus and Athanasius at Serdica. The same may be said of Euphratas of Cologne, a bishop who subscribed to the western creed of Serdica while also espousing monarchian views.

We have the proceedings of a small Gallic council that convened in 346 (or 345) in Cologne (Coloniae Agrippinae) in response to letters of complaint (*epistola*) against the bishop of that city, Euphratas (or Euftratas), the metropolitan bishop of Gallia Secunda. Little is known of Euphratas except that he subscribed to the

⁵¹ Winrich A. Löhr, “A Sense of Tradition: The Homoiousian Church Party,” *Arianism After Arius* (ed. M. R. Barnes and D. H. Williams; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993) 99.

⁵² See Eusebius of Vercelli (c. 362), *De trinitate* 3.55, which joins Hebion and Photinus as rejecting and agreeing to the same doctrines (CCSL 9:44); Filastrius of Brescia (c. 380), *Diversarum hereseon* 65, catalogues Photinus as a follower of Paul of Samosata (see 91.2; CCSL 9:244); Ambrose of Milan (c. 397), *De obitu Theodosii* 49 (PL 16:1403A) identifies Photinus as the heretic who denied the Son’s divinity; Rufinus of Aquileia (c. 404) in his *Expositio Symboli* 37 mentions Photinus as the successor of Paul of Samosata (CCSL 20:172).

decisions of (western) Serdica and had been sent as one of two delegates to Antioch in order to communicate the emperor Constans's support of the Serdican resolutions.⁵³ It appears, however, that Euphratas's anti-"Arianism" was founded on a monarchian theology that was only revealed after Serdica, perhaps by the bishop's opponents. Whatever the exact circumstances were, the Cologne *acta*, whose authenticity may reasonably be accepted,⁵⁴ records the following charges made against Euphratas:

- 1) that he denied Christ is God (*Christum Deum negat*) (ch. 2; 3; 5) and that by denying that Christ is God he was blaspheming the Holy Spirit (ch. 6; 9; 10; 14);
- 2) that he denied Christ "was first of all our Lord and God" (*primordiale Dominum et Deum nostrum*) and "that he has existed from the beginning" (ch. 8);⁵⁵ and
- 3) that "he asserted that Christ was only a man" (*tantum nudum hominem asserit Christum*) (ch. 8).⁵⁶

Euphratas had already been condemned by five bishops in an unknown location prior to the Cologne assembly (ch. 10), but this seems to have had little effect against his claim of orthodoxy, nor did it extricate him from the city. In the condemnations attested in the *acta*, several bishops bear witness to Euphratas's unabated activity. The council held in Cologne, Euphratas's own see, was a forceful maneuver, though we do not know how successful it was in removing him once and for all.

The end of the *acta* breaks off suddenly and so the council's deposition is missing, though it is clear from each bishop's subscription that Euphratas was ultimately

⁵³ Athanasius, *Historia Arianorum* 20 (PG 26:716C-D); Theodoret, *Hist. eccl.* 2.7 (PG 82:1019A). Euphratas, along with Vincentius of Capua, are referred to as "admirable men," representing the integrity of the council's decisions.

⁵⁴ There is no agreement on the authenticity of these *acta*, which are preserved only in a tenth-century codex, though they are acknowledged in the eighth-century *Life of Maximus of Trier* (CCSL 148:26; SC 241:68-9). For the negative position, see L. Duchesne, "Le faux concile de Cologne (346)" *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 3 (1902) 16-29, and Hanns C. Brennecke, "Synodum congregavit contra Euphratam nefandissimum episcopum" *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 90 (1979) 30-54. The introduction to the *acta* places the proceedings on 12 May 346 ("Post consulatum Amanti et Albani, iiii Idus Maias"), although it could have been the previous year. Fl. Amantius, who was consul in 345 with Numinius Albinus, might be identical with the Amantius of 346. See Arnold H. M. Jones, John R. Martindale, and J. Morris, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971) 1:51. Moreover, the exact identity of the Albinus of 346 is not certain. It may or may not be the same as the M. Nummius Albinus of 345 (*Ibid.*, 1:37). See *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* (ed. Johannes D. Mansi; Florence, 1759) 2:1371, n. 1; *Concilia Antiqua Galliae* (ed. Jacques Sirmond; Paris, 1629) 11-3.

⁵⁵ To which the council replied, "cum per uniuersos prophetas manifestetur illum ante mundi constitutionem fuisse cum Deo Patre omnipotente . . ." ("although it was made plain through all the prophets that had been with God the Father Almighty before the foundation of the world . . .")

⁵⁶ The letter from the eastern bishops from Serdica (c. 343) condemn the views as most heinous (aimed implicitly Marcellus); anyone who says, "Christum non esse Deum, aut ante aevum non fuisse Christum, neque filium dei . . ." (CAP A 4.2 (CSEL 65:73)).

condemned on doctrinal grounds. Nothing is said about others in league with him, nor is there any mention of Photinus. However, there is a correlation between the charges made against Euphratas and what is usually ascribed to Photinus.

Photinus too was under investigation in the mid-340s, and he had been condemned by name for the first time in the (so-called) Macrostich creed in 344 and at least at two other times, once in Milan (345)⁵⁷ and again two years later in Rome.⁵⁸ While an accurate accounting of the conciliar activity in this period is problematic,⁵⁹ the mid- and late 340s seems to have been a period of intense investigation of *mia-hypostatic* theologies⁶⁰ that exhibited monarchianism of one sort or another. The anathema from the Macrostich provides grounds for indictment: "they who negate Christ's existence before the ages and His divinity, and unending Kingdom, upon the pretence of supporting the divine Monarchy."⁶¹

Despite organized action against Photinus, the councils suffered from impotence because of popular support for the bishop. At least twice he was condemned, as Hilary reports: "Fotinus, apprehended as a heretic, and a long time earlier pronounced guilty and for some time cut off from united communion, could not even then be brought through a popular faction . . ."⁶² The final straw was an imperially endorsed assembly of bishops in Photinus's own see in 351; it officially condemned and replaced him with the Homoian sympathizer, Germinius from Cyzicus. Still, this deposition did not quell Photinus's activities in the city anymore than it eradicated monarchianism.

The synod at Sirmium in 351 was a bid for unity along several lines.⁶³ Constantius was now the Augustus for the east and west, and with ostensible political unity he hoped the church would at last realize a common theological mind. A

⁵⁷ CAP B 2.4 (19); CSEL 65:142. Corroboration may be found in Liberius's remarks of 353 that it had been eight years previously at Milan that [the council] failed to condemn Arius. *Ep. ad Constantium imperatorem per Luciferium episcopum* (CAP A 7; CSEL 65:89–93).

⁵⁸ CAP B 2.7: "Haec epistula (of Valens and Ursacius to Julius) post biennium missa est, quam hereses Fotini a Romanis damnata est." (CSEL 65:145).

⁵⁹ There is little agreement among scholars over the exact number and locations of councils that dealt with Photinus. Besides Milan 345, Charles Pietri argues for another council in Milan two or three years later. *Roma Christiana. Recherches sur l'Église de Rome, son organisation, sa politique, son idéologie de Miltiade à Sixte III (311–440)* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1976) 1:232–34. John N. D. Kelly inserts another council at Sirmium in 347, *Early Christian Creeds* (rev. ed.; London: Longman, 1978) 281, which is the least likely of scenarios given the level of support Photinus enjoyed in Sirmium during this period. And Speller interprets the passage indicated in n. 24 as a reference to another council of Milan in 347 and follows Kelly for the convention of the Sirmium council ("New Light of the Photinians," 101).

⁶⁰ Joseph Lienhard, "The 'Arian'" Controversy: Some Categories Reconsidered," *Theological Studies* 48 (1987) 415–37.

⁶¹ Athanasius, *De synodis* 26.5 (NPNF 4:463).

⁶² CAP B 2.9 (1); CSEL 65.146.6–8. There is a break in the text at the end of the sentence, leaving the direction of Hilary's thought not completely clear.

⁶³ Greek version in Athanasius, *De synodis* 26; Latin in Hilary, *De synodis* 38–61.

reasonable agenda for the bishops' agreement was in the works. Condemnation of doctrinal extremes would enable a more fruitful search for a shared confession. Besides a few standard denunciations of "Arianism," the chief target of the council's deliberations was Photinus,⁶⁴ whose denunciation could bring eastern and western forces together in a way that Serdica failed to do. That Photinus served as the "new whipping boy" of the west suggests the council was using him as renewed means for condemning Marcellus (and Athanasius). This may have been partly true, but detailed attention to the reports about Photinus's theology forbids this explanation to stand alone. What concerned the council in its denunciations was not that Photinus was another Marcellus but, when his reported views were articulated, the extremes of *mia-hypostatic* theology were made most evident.

According to Hilary's commentary on the Sirmium 351 creed, written just seven years after the event, Photinus's teaching forced the council to "set forth a wider and broader exposition of the creed"⁶⁵ . . . because the heresy which Photinus was reviving was trying to sneak into our catholic home through a multitude of hidden tunnels."⁶⁶ Hilary insists that an erroneous interpretation of one divine substance was not a small matter in the west. In chapters 67–71 of *De synodis*, he frankly states to his fellow bishops that the concept behind *homoousios* already had a history of misuse that was not sufficiently recognized. "Many of us," he laments, "so preach the one substance of the Father and the Son that we may seem to be preaching no more piously than as impiously."⁶⁷ One-substance theology had been used to argue that God's unity should be understood in terms of "singularity" or one subsisting *persona*, or that the divine nature is "one and only, though denoted by two names,"⁶⁸ or that the Son was a portion of the Father as if the Father cut off a portion of himself.⁶⁹ The general point is that pro-Nicene language is no guarantee of preserving the unity and distinction of the Father and the Son, with the result that western bishops will require greater nuance in their theological definitions.

Returning to the Sirmium council, modalism, adoptionism, and the movement of dilation-contraction are all identified in the anathemas. This does not neces-

⁶⁴ As per Epiphanius, *Pan.* 71.1ff., though Epiphanius is confused about the council's location, which he places at Serdica.

⁶⁵ The fourth creed of Antioch, which Hilary had just discussed in *De synodis* 34.

⁶⁶ *De synodis* 39: "Necessitas et tempus admonuit eos, qui tum conuenerant, per multiplices quaestiones latius ac diffusius expositionem fidei ordinare; quia multis et occultis cuniculis in catholicam domum ea, quae per Photinum renouabatur, heresis tentaret irrepere" (PL 10:512C–513A).

⁶⁷ "Multi ex nobis, Fratres charissimi, ita unam substantiam Patris et Filii praedicant, ut uideri possint non magis id pie quam impie praedicare" (PL 10. 525A).

⁶⁸ "At uero si idcirco unius substantiae Pater et Filius dicatur, ut hic subsistens, sub significatione licet duum nominum, unus ac solus sit" *De synodis* 68 (PL 10:25B).

⁶⁹ "Quin etiam et hujus statim erroris occurrit occasio, ut diuisus a sese Pater intelligatur, et partem exsecuisse quae esset sibi filius" *De synodis* 68 (PL 10:525C); c. 71, "Sit una substantia ex naturae genitae proprietate; non sit aut ex portione, aut ex unione, aut ex communione . . . Una sit ex similitudine, non ex solitudine" (PL 10:527B). See Victorinus, *Candidi Arriani ad Marium Victorinum rhetorem* 9 (CSEL 83:1.11).

sarily imply that there existed three separate monarchian positions as much as three emphases among proponents of monarchianism. There was certainly some coinherence among the emphases. Among the number of unacceptable theological propositions listed at Sirmium are: 1) the Son did not collaborate with the Father at creation; 2) the Logos was not begotten by the Father before all ages; and 3) the Father, Son and Spirit are one *prosopōn*. The last of the 26 anathemas of Sirmium sums up the Photinian position: "Whosoever shall deny that Christ is God, Son of God, as being before the ages, and having subserved the Father in the framing of the world; but [after] that time he was born of Mary he was thereafter called Christ and Son, and took an origin of being God, is anathema."

Important to the bishops' concerns over Photinus was his apparent use of the Old Testament in showing the absence of an actual hypostatic existence of the Son. The same passages others read as christophanies via the Logos before his physical birth, Photinus interpreted as the activity of one Unbegotten God. Abraham did not see the begotten Son in Gen 18.1, nor was it the Son who rained fire from heaven (Gen 19.24), nor did Jacob wrestle with the Son as man (Gen 32.26) In each case it was a manifestation of the one God and one divine spirit. In Hilary's gloss of the Sirmium creed he notes that these passages constituted points of denial on Photinus's part and that it was necessary for the council to list each one lest anyone interpret the Scripture to mean the Son of God did not exist before the Son of the Virgin, or that the "substance of the Son" should be denied and applied to the Unborn Father.⁷⁰ Epiphanius was likewise cognizant of monarchian exegesis that took place at Sirmium, noting that Gen 19:24 and Dan 7:13 were uttered prophetically, "not because the Son existed, but seeing as he was going to be called Son after Mary . . . everything is referred to him from the beginning by way of anticipation."⁷¹

Photinian (and apparently Marcellan) exegesis, however, was not oblivious to the prophetic nature of the Old Testament prophesy about the Son. The fifth anathema of Sirmium condemns anyone who says "the Son existed before Mary only according to foreknowledge and predestination." There were two crucial implications to this view, both of which are commented upon by Hilary. First, to say that the Son was ordained as an integral stage of God's prophetic plan of redemption, need not necessitate that the Son had a pre-incarnate substantial existence. "He existed according to foreknowledge and predestination, and not according to the essence of his subsistent nature" (*non secundum naturae subsistentis essentiam*).⁷²

The second implication of the foreknowledge and predestination of the Son before Mary is that Mary's birth of the Son is the progressive realization of God in history. That is, the Son born of the Virgin is the result of God's substantial expansion or dilation.⁷³ The theory of God's substantial expansion into the Son

⁷⁰ *De synodis* 50 (PL 10:517B).

⁷¹ *Panarion* 71. 2, 3 (Amidon, 280).

⁷² *De synodis* 43 (PL 10:514B).

⁷³ See Pseudo-Athanasius, *Oratio* IV. 13 (PG 26:485A).

was the explanation for both the biblical prophesy pertaining to the Son's coming and why the Son did not yet possess an essential subsistence before Bethlehem (see Sirmium anathemas 6–7). But beyond these reasons of biblical exegesis the Photinians also claimed that the immutability of God was best preserved by the simple dilation (and contraction) of the one divine substance.⁷⁴ The Son processed as a movement within God yet always remained in the Father, *homoousios*, immutable and impassible.

About the very time Hilary was writing these words, Marius Victorinus in Rome was trying to show why this particular understanding of divine movement was inadequate for a proper interpretation of *homoousios*. In doing so, Victorinus observed that “the heretics” used a Stoic formulary known as *typus* for their enumeration of the Father and Son within the Spirit of God. This was a double movement—a movement intrinsic to spirit (or divinity)—that was realized through a binary rhythm of dilation and contraction, diastolic and systolic, a progression to the outside and then a regression to the inside. The Logos of God signified that movement. It is an extension of God that is entirely immanent to the divine substance and consistent with divine immutability: *ab istius modi motione repente erumpit filietas quaedam*.⁷⁵ Thus, according to the Photinian explanation of the Son's generation, the divine spirit or Logos represented a stage of the progression that is God, prompted by the needs of creation, redemption, and consummation. It is not a view of sonship (*filietas*) that shared the burden that pro-Nicene doctrine bore, namely, a view of consubstantiality that also necessitated an eternal hypostatic distinction. As Victorinus sought to prove, the consubstantial Logos must be understood at the same time as existing with God, “in the form of God” (Phil 2:9), and who emptied himself before he was made man.⁷⁶

More polemically damaging than linking Photinus with the dubious reputation of Marcellus of Ancyra, the former was identified by his contemporaries as the theological successor of Paul of Samosata and Sabellius, and in fact it went all the way back to Hebion. This sort of “anti-succession” of doctrinal error served to create an association of damnation,⁷⁷ supposedly ruling out the legitimacy of

⁷⁴ *De synodis* 45 (PL 10:514C).

⁷⁵ *Candidi Ariani ad Marium Victorinum* 9 (CSEL 83:1.11).

⁷⁶ *Adversus Arium* 1. 21 (CSEL 83:1.89).

⁷⁷ See Damasus of Rome's ‘confessio’ (or *Tome*, A.D. 377) in a letter to Paulinus (of Antioch): “We anathematize the Photinus who is renewing the heresy of Hebion, confessed that our Lord Jesus Christ was only of Mary” (Theodoret, *Hist. eccl.* V. 11; NPNF 3:139); Rufinus, *Expositio Symboli* 37: “It is an empty council that asserts what Paul of Samosata and his latter-day successor, Photinus, taught” (CCSL 20:172); and the *Epistola legatorum Lampsacene synodi ad Liberium papa*, which condemned Photinus, Marcion, patripassionists, Marcellus and Sabellius—“omnes haereses aduersantes praedictae sanctae fidei, quae pie et catholice a sanctis patribus Nicanae exposita est” (PL 8.1377B).

Photinus's claims as pro-Nicene and pro-Serdican. It was decidedly important that theological distance be created between Photinus and neo-Niceneism after 360.⁷⁸ The reason for this was clear: both of these perspectives of God depended upon a single *hypostasis* or *ousia* and thus sought to protect the divine substance of the Son from the weaknesses of his earthly incarnation.⁷⁹ The Logos of God is within God, revealed by a procession within the divine nature without altering that nature or disturbing its fundamental unity. Western writers had been firm on this point but were slowly discovering in the 360s and 370s that it was not enough if they wished to maintain the dual reality of the Son's divinity and substantial uniqueness as Savior. Two examples of this growing awareness should suffice.

First, Ambrose of Milan, writing about a decade after Hilary, explains in the beginning of his defense of the Nicene faith that the doctrine of God's unity had to avoid three extremes: 1) confusing the Father with the *Verbum*, as Sabellius did; 2) holding that the Son's first manifestation (*initium fili*) was in the Virgin's [womb], as Photinus taught; and 3) Arius's contention of dissimilar powers, which thus divided the Son's nature from the Father's.⁸⁰ If God is one, Ambrose argues, then he is one in name and one in power as Trinity. So the Son, as the Word, is the power (*virtus*) and wisdom (*sapientia*) of God (1 Cor 1:24) and is one with the Father in divinity and eternity. This is not to say that the Father is himself the Son, for "between the Father and the Son the distinction of generation is expressed."⁸¹ Father and Son are not mere names because they exist in distinction as Father and Son, nor is there a separation of their divinity.⁸²

It is noteworthy that Ambrose never uses the actual term *homoousios* or consubstantiality in this treatise (*De fide*, books I–II) even though he signals in the very beginning that he is taking the Nicene creed as his point of departure.⁸³ Indeed, he rarely uses *substantia* or its Greek corollary, *ousia*. The obvious reason for the term's absence is the lack of its appearance in Scripture. At least *substantia* could be located in Psalms 88:46 and 138 (139):14 as well as in Jeremiah 23:18. But in

⁷⁸ Proponents of Marcellus wrote an exposition of the bishop's faith in order to show his orthodoxy and his differences with Photinus. Martin Tetz, "Markellianer und Athanasios von Alexandrien. Die markellianische Expositio fidei ad Athanasium des Diakons Eugenios von Ankyra," *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 64 (1973) 75–121.

⁷⁹ Hilary makes it clear in his thumbnail sketch of Sabellius and Photinus, who he sees as having similar theologies but for different reasons, that they both supported the full divinity of Christ as manifested in his works. *De trinitate*. 7.5–7 (SC 448:285–90).

⁸⁰ *De fide* 1.1.6 (CSEL 78:7). See 2.3.33. Books I–II of *De fide* were written and submitted to the emperor Gratian in 378. See D. H. Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Nicene-Arian Conflicts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) 141–45.

⁸¹ *De fide* 1.2.16 (CSEL 78:10).

⁸² *De fide* 2.3.33, "Pater enim et filius distinctionem habent ut pater et filius, separationem divinitatis non habent." (CSEL 78:68).

⁸³ *De fide* 1.prol. 5.

an ostensible continuation of books I–II,⁸⁴ Ambrose suggests another reason. In *De fide* III. xv. 125–26, he observes that ever since the Nicene creed was issued, the “Arians” associated the term *homoousios* with the monarchian teaching of the “Sabellians.” In response, Ambrose offers a striking gloss on the controversial word: “Rightly do we say that the Son is *homoousios* with the Father because by this word both a distinction of the persons and the unity of nature are indicated.”⁸⁵ It would seem that by the late 370s Nicene terminology had become necessarily more complex to avoid the pitfalls that Hilary had earlier warned about.

Our second example comes from the homilies of Zeno of Verona, a contemporary of Ambrose and a fellow northern Italian. For the sake of creation (*ordinem rerum*), the Word (*verbum*) is said to have burst forth directly from the “heart” (*cor*) of the Father, with the process being described as “omnipotence propagating itself.” There is no question that the Son possesses everything of the Father being generated by him (*de deo nascitur deus*), while the Father is diminished in nothing by the procession of the Son.⁸⁶ No room is given for his listeners to interpret the begetting of the Son as anything but an exact duplication of nature when he says: “the Father in Himself begets another self from Himself” (*pater in ipsum alium se genuit ex se*) (I. 17.2). Thus it can be said that the Father has communicated his own substance to the Son so perfectly that he has begotten another self in the Son.

Zeno is most concerned with those who try to demean the person of the Christ because of his work as the incarnate Son. But he also identifies the error that marks the existence of the Son with his nativity. Regarding this latter view, Zeno is aware of those who assert “Jesus Christ assumed his beginning (*principium*) from the womb of the virgin Mary, and was made, not born, God on account of his righteousness”⁸⁷—a reference undoubtedly to the Photinians. The bishop of Verona knows he has to be careful in defining the Son’s *nativitas* (his word for “generation”) given his assertion of the Son as “another self” of the Father. Despite his defense of the Nicene creed, Zeno never employs the terms *homoousios* or *consubstantialis* but instead uses *una substantia*. It is likely this choice of language reveals a consciousness of anti-Photinian interpretation from which he meant to distinguish himself.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Books 3–5 were written at the end of 379 or early 380 were later appended to the earlier books in order to form a literary whole. See “Polemics and Politics in Ambrose of Milan’s *De fide*,” *JTS* (1995) 519–31.

⁸⁵ “Recte ergo homousion patri filium dicimus, quia verbo eo personarum distinctio et naturae unitas significatur” *De fide* 3.15.126 (CSEL 78:152). For a pro-“Arian” argument against Photinus’s views of *una substantia*, see *Scripta Arriana Latina* 5 (CCSL 87:236–37).

⁸⁶ *Tractatus* 1.56.1 (CCSL 12:131.2–6). See the tractate entitled *De Genesi* (1.17) which, despite its title, is Zeno’s defense of the language of the Nicene Creed, and how the begotten Son “possessed everything of the Father’s, subtracting nothing from the Father.” I. 17.2 (CCSL 12:64.7–10).

⁸⁷ *Tractatus* 2.8 (CCSL 12).

⁸⁸ Martin Stepanich, *Christology of Zeno of Verona* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1948) 60.

■ Conclusion

While we must not overstate the implications of the above evidence by portraying Photinus as a more influential figure than he really was, modern patristic interpretations of the theological dynamics of the fourth century has usually suffered from just the opposite problem. The question is, how successful were pro-Nicene/anti-“Arian” polemics in portraying monarchianism as an isolated phenomenon and completely aberrant from the theology of its time? We are left with the impression that the theology associated with Photinus is easily dismissed as a minor but chronic irritation in the search for the Christian doctrine of God. Just as in the case of Arius, the linkage of Photinus with heretical characters meant that any extended refutation of his theology—where it was actually known—was redundant to what supposedly everyone already knew. Although the danger that a monarchian interpretation of God presented to Nicene theology lay just beneath the surface, it was important to treat it as ephemeral to the concerns of the Church. Photinus’s views, therefore, were reduced and simplified to a few choice slogans that were easily read as a position completely decontextualized from the church’s tradition and scripture.

By gathering the various strands of disparate evidence from the third and fourth centuries, it is plausible to maintain that Photinus and his doctrinal sympathizers represented and continued the theological tradition of what we know of earlier monarchian trajectories. They were not islands of heresy, cut off from the sea of the church’s tradition as their adversaries sought to show. Witness the warning Rufinus of Aquileia makes in his opening remarks concerning the necessity of providing an orthodox exposition of the Apostles’ or (old) Roman creed:

It has come to my attention that quite a few prominent writers have published concise and doctrinally sound manuals on the subject. But I know that the heretic Photinus, has composed [his own work], not for explaining the sense of the words to his listeners, but, in the guise of simple and faithful statements, he directs their attention to the reasoning of his teaching.⁸⁹

It was not only the Nicene creed that concerned pro-Nicene commentators. It seems that Photinian assemblies⁹⁰ also claimed their allegiance to the one of the prototypes of the Apostles’ Creed. Merely reciting the words was not enough to show one’s orthodoxy as it would appear from Rufinus, who is committed to showing the key differences between right and wrong explanations of this creed.

As contemporary scholarship is rewriting the way in which Marcellus of Ancyra significantly influenced the direction of fourth-century trinitarian theology in the east,⁹¹ we are able to point to specific instances in which Photinus and Photinians

⁸⁹ *Expositio Symboli* 1 (CCSL 20:133). No other heretical figures are mentioned in this opening chapter.

⁹⁰ Photinus had been dead for about two decades when Rufinus wrote this exposition circa 404.

⁹¹ E.g., Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum*; Alastair H. B. Logan, “Marcellus of Ancyra and the Councils of A.D. 325: Antioch, Ancyra and Nicaea,” *JTS* 43 (1992) 428–46; Kelley McCarthy Spoerl, “Apollinarian Christology and the Anti-Marcellan Tradition,” *JTS* 45 (1994) 545–68.

endured in the west and how they prompted pro-Nicene Latin trinitarianism to define itself in contradistinction. At the end of the conciliar pro-Nicene document from Alexandria in 362, known as the “Tomus ad Antiochenos,” Paulinus (of Antioch) subscribed to the document although with an important qualification: “Once again I anathematize the heresy of Sabellius and of Photinus and every heresy walking in faith of Nicaea.”⁹² Not only were monarchical systems of theology not as ephemeral in Latin thought as later historiography makes it, but the persistence and influence⁹³ of another voice of post-Nicene orthodoxy was a critical part in the shaping of early Latin theology.

⁹² *Tomus* Athanasii Alexandrini ad Antiochenos 11 (PG 26:809B; trans. *NPNF* 4:486).

⁹³ Certainly one of the most enduring aspects is found in the gospel prologues of some codices of the Vulgate. *Novum Testamentum Latine*, (ed. John Wordsworth; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889–98) 15–17. The preface to Matthew is particularly striking for evidence of a strong Monarchian theology. According to this writer, there are two beginnings (*principia*) in the generation of Christ: the first dealing with his incarnation and the other according to his election, both manifesting that Christ is “in the fathers.” Since the early twentieth century, these prologues have been identified as Priscillian in their origination. Germain Morin, *Études, Textes, Découvertes: Contributions à la littérature et à l’histoire des douze premiers siècles* (Paris: A. Picard, 1913) 151–205; Henry Chadwick, *Priscillian of Avila* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976) 103–4.

The Body of Paradise and the Body of the Resurrection: Gender and the Angelic Life in Gregory of Nyssa's *De hominis opificio**

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As one of the central concerns of *De hominis opificio*, Gregory of Nyssa attempts to reconcile the biblical claim that God made human beings in the image of God (κατ' εἰκόνα θεοῦ ἐποίησεν αὐτόν, Gen 1:27) with the reality of humanity's present misery and corruption. How, Nyssen asks, can God invest human beings with rational faculties that equip them as God's viceroys over creation and yet find themselves subject to the dominion of non-rational, sensual impulses?¹ He answers the question by distinguishing human nature in its present form and orientation from those lofty, intellectual aspects of human nature that God intended for humanity in the beginning and in the resurrection. He characterizes the former by passions and pain; the latter, by the blessedness of communion with God. But this raises some key questions: If the passions cause our present misery, what does that say about gender and sexuality? Does he associate them solely with our present condition? Do they represent an accommodation or a cause of our present corruption? Or do gender and sexuality form part and parcel of human nature as God willed it from the beginning?

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¹ I use the term “non-rational” instead of “irrational” when translating ἄλογος in referring to the impulses of the appetitive faculties. As I shall argue, Nyssen does not view the appetitive drives as “irrational” in the sense of contrary to reason, but as “non-rational” in the sense of being prior to and independent of the critical deliberation of the rational faculties.

Over the last couple of decades, scholars have begun to reexamine Nyssen's ascetic theology and specifically the place of virginity and sexuality in it. Mark Hart has argued that scholars have exaggerated Nyssen's praise of the celibate life as superior to the life of marriage.² Hart claims that the idealistic terms in which Nyssen depicts virginity and the hyperbolic rhetoric with which he critiques marriage suggest an intentionally ironic praise of celibacy. As Hart interprets Nyssen, far from being superior to the married life, celibacy accommodates weak Christians who lack the courage necessary to withstand the passions and insecurities of worldly attachments that would keep them from the contemplative life—the life which calls to all Christians, single and married.³ The absolute renunciation of marriage remains for those who cannot rise above the temptation of “gratifying symbiosis” that accompanies the married life.⁴ Recently, John Behr has sought to support Hart's interpretation of Nyssen's view of marriage and celibacy, arguing that such a reading appears wholly consistent with Nyssen's theological anthropology as laid out in *De hominis opificio*.⁵ By this account, God fashioned human beings as hybrids possessing both the rational nature of God and the angels and the non-rational and corporeal nature of all the lower creatures. Essential to humans' kinship with the animals, they share the gender and sexuality of the corporeal nature. When ordered by the rational soul, the animal soul and body attain perfection, precisely because reason governs them.⁶ Behr concludes that given the power of the rational faculties to order the non-rational, Nyssen's theory of creation opens the possibility “for a restored use of human sexuality, an exercise of sexuality under the full autonomy of reason, in an angelic mode, in which the human being fulfills its purpose in creation of uplifting and integrating the life of the body and the senses with reason and the divine.”⁷

Hart's and Behr's works indeed have advanced Nyssen scholarship by highlighting the dynamic relationship between the rational and non-rational faculties of the soul—a relationship that, far from being dualistic, reflects Nyssen's psychosomatic

² Mark D. Hart, “Reconciliation of Body and Soul: Gregory of Nyssa's Deeper Theology of Marriage,” *Theological Studies* 51 (1990) 450–78; and “Gregory of Nyssa's Ironic Praise of the Celibate Life,” *Heythrop Journal* 33 (1992) 1–19. Hart's interpretation of Nyssen's views of marriage and celibacy has influenced the scholarly reassessment of the emotions and the erotic in Nyssen's theology, especially his *Commentarius in Canticum Canticorum*. See Virginia Burrus, “*Begotten, Not Made*”: *Conceiving Manhood in Late Antiquity* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000); and Martin Laird, “Under Solomon's Tutelage: The Education of Desire in the *Homilies on the Song of Songs*,” *Modern Theology* 18 (2002) 507–25. For an excellent critique of Hart's argument based on the use of irony in classical rhetoric, see Valerie A. Karras, “A Re-Evaluation of Marriage, Celibacy, and Irony in Gregory of Nyssa's *On Virginity*,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 13 (2005) 111–21.

³ Hart, “Reconciliation,” 474.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 455–56.

⁵ John Behr, “The Rational Animal: A Rereading of Gregory of Nyssa's *De hominis opificio*,” *JECS* 7 (1999) 219–47.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 226–27.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 224.

anthropology and rests at the foundation of his account of the transformation of our animal nature. Their work has explored one trajectory of Nyssen's anthropology from which we may glean insights useful for modern theological reflection. Their treatment of gender and sexuality, however, does not take into consideration the central role of the fall and of eschatology in forming Nyssen's anthropology. One must read *De hominis opificio* in terms of Nyssen's threefold distinction (which provides the governing principle of the text) between God's original intention for human nature, God's modification of this plan in the actual formation of the first human beings, and the eschatological fulfillment of God's original purpose. Focusing on *De hominis opificio* and his other ascetic texts written at roughly the same time,⁸ I shall argue that Nyssen views the division of humanity into male and female, not as a part of God's original intention for humanity, but merely as the result of God's anticipation of the fall. In other words, had God foreseen that humanity would not fall, he would not have gendered human beings for a sexual mode of reproduction. Humanity's rational corporeal existence, as God *originally intended* it, represents, for Nyssen, a reflection of the angelic mode of life that characterizes our existence in the resurrection. To prove this thesis, we need to examine, first, Nyssen's account of humans' relationship with the animals; second, the relationship between sin and sexuality; and third, the angelic body of the resurrection.

■ A Blending of the Earthly and the Divine

Nyssen explains the reason for God's creation of human beings as material creatures in terms of their relationship with God and with the rest of material creation. God hosts a feast, and humanity comes as God's honored guest. Thus he saw fit to create Adam last, so that he might fully lay out the banquet before his arrival.⁹ Humanity rules over the material creation. The land represents the imperial residence, and the flora and fauna serve as the ruler's wealth and subjects. Through the delights of creation and mankind's enjoyment of them, God intended that human beings might "have knowledge of the Giver, and by the beauty and majesty of the things he saw might trace out that power of the Maker which is beyond speech and lan-

⁸ Behr objects to the "synthetic" reading of Nyssen that has led interpreters to import the "garments of skin" allusion to Gen 3:21, which depicts sexuality and man's bestial nature as a postlapsarian addition to human nature. This language, he rightly points out, does not appear in *De hominis opificio*. We should read Nyssen's words carefully in terms of the internal logic of the passage rather than "looking further afield for confirmation or corroboration" (Behr, "Rational Animal," 222–23). The treatment of the passions, virtue, the resurrection, and the images of God is consistent within his works on ascetic theology, *De hominis opificio*, *De vita Macrinae*, and *De anime et resurrectione*, which were written together between 379 and 381. Therefore, it is quite reasonable to test one's reading of *De hominis opificio* against Nyssen's arguments in *De vita Macrinae* and *De anime et resurrectione*.

⁹ *Hom. opif.* 2.2 (Patrologia Graeca [PG] 44:133a).

guage.”¹⁰ The ineffable and unknowable transcendent God makes himself known in his works, which reflect the divine beauty.

God fashioned humanity as a hybrid mixture of earthly and divine, so that by means of his sensual nature, he might enjoy the earthly creation and, by means of his likeness to God, the divine. Nyssen locates the immaterial divine aspect of human nature in the mind, which, like the immanent but incorporeal Word,¹¹ does not stay confined to a single bodily organ but remains present throughout the body.¹² Yet the rational nature and activities of the mind depend upon the form and function of the body. The upright posture not only signifies humanity’s royal dignity rising above the servile posture of the other creatures, but it frees the hands for carrying, which allows the mouth more subtlety for speech in the service of reason.¹³ Through the senses, the portals of the mind, the intellect receives and interprets a multidimensional flow of perceptions about the world. These perceptions equip the mind to reason.¹⁴

As God’s viceroy over creation, humanity exerts dominion over the earth through the governance of reason. The rule of reason perfects material creation by apprehending the proper ends of all things and ordering them to those purposes. The perfecting sovereignty of reason manifests most clearly for Nyssen in the relationship of the rational human soul and the body. He speaks of the soul as endowed with an autocratic will necessary for its royal commission. Thus the soul bears the image of the Lord of the universe, whose rational dignity appears in those faculties and virtues necessary for the soul’s autarchy.¹⁵ Through the rational faculties, human beings enjoy what Nyssen calls “what is free from necessity” (ἐλεύθερον ἀνάγκης).¹⁶ Non-rational animals remain subject to a kind of necessity, because they can know only the immediate, sensual good of a particular object and therefore can seek only sensual goods. Moreover, because they lack reason, they do not have the capability of self-criticism and, consequently, may pursue the object of their appetite with a reckless abandon that may prove destructive.¹⁷ Human beings, by contrast, have the ability both to apprehend the higher, intelligible goods of God and to criticize themselves about the impulses of their appetitive nature. There-

¹⁰ Ibid. 2.1 (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series 2 [NPNF²] 5:390; PG 44:133a–b).

¹¹ Nyssen explains that the human mind, in bearing the image of the divine, shares the inscrutable nature of its archetype (ibid. 11.3 [PG 44:156b]).

¹² Ibid. 12.3 (PG 44:157c).

¹³ Ibid. 8.1–2 (PG 44:144b–c); 8.8 (PG 44:148d–149a); and 9.1–2 (PG 44:149b–c).

¹⁴ Ibid. 10.2–3 (PG 44:152b–c).

¹⁵ Ibid. 4 (PG 44:136b–c). Nyssen identifies those virtues that display God’s own beauty and sovereignty and with which man is equipped as purity, freedom from passion, blessedness, and alienation from all evil. The divine faculties are reason, rational judgment, and apprehension (ibid. 5.1 [PG 44:137b]).

¹⁶ Ibid. 16.11 (PG 44:184b).

¹⁷ *Anim. et res.* (PG 46:61b–c).

fore, bodily appetites do not wholly determine human actions. The dominion of the rational soul over the body has the effect of infusing the body with the beauty of the divine.¹⁸

The psychosomatic unity of the person proves central to Nyssen's anthropology. Yet in *De hominis opificio*, he emphasizes the rational soul, which bears the image of God. Although the human soul possesses the faculties of the vegetative soul of plants and animals and the sentient soul of animals, human beings possess not a tripartite but a single trichotomous soul that finds perfection, or completion, in the rational soul.¹⁹ The benevolent hegemony of the mind, invests the body with order, form, and beauty. The logic of this view should imply that in matters of sexuality, the mind controls and orders sexual activity and transforms it from a bestial act of passion to a loftier act of love for one's mate and of obedience to God's command to "be fruitful and multiply." In other words, given Nyssen's view of the hierarchical relationship of the soul to the body, one might expect a view of sex not radically different from Augustine's. Adam and Eve, Augustine asserts, would have had sexual intercourse, even if God had not expelled them from Paradise. He explains the chief difference between sex in Eden and sex after the fall with the notion that concupiscence would not have tainted intercourse in Paradise, but reason would have controlled it.²⁰ Based on Nyssen's view of humanity as the union of the rational and animal natures, Behr reasons that, because gender remains an essential component of the animal nature—which God intends for humanity to raise up—gender must remain an essential component of human nature as well. Behr concludes unequivocally: "Human beings are not and never were, nor were ever meant to be, solely intellectual beings, as the angels, but they embrace both dimensions of creation, the asexual rational part and the sexual non-rational."²¹ Yet Nyssen does not present at all this picture of sex and gender in *De hominis opificio*.

¹⁸ "Thus so long as [mind] keeps in touch with [God], the communication of the true beauty extends proportionally through the whole series, beautifying by the superior nature that which comes next to it; but when there is any interruption of this beneficent connection, . . . then is displayed the misshapen character of matter, . . . and by its shapelessness is also destroyed that beauty of nature with which it [i.e., body] is adorned through the mind" (*Hom. opif.* 12.10 [NPNF² 5:399; PG 44:161d]).

¹⁹ "Let no one suppose . . . that in the compound nature of man there are three souls welded together. . . . The true and perfect soul is naturally one, the intellectual and immaterial, which mingles with our material nature by the agency of the senses . . ." (ibid. 14.2 [NPNF² 5:403; PG 44:176b]). Although Nyssen readily describes our nature as compound (which reflects the hierarchy of creation), he steadfastly refuses to speak of it as a microcosm. Our dignity lies in our likeness to God, not in our similarity to the gnat or the mouse (ibid. 16.1–2 [NPNF² 5:404; PG 44:180a]). Similarly, in *De anima et resurrectione*, Nyssen insists that the essence of human nature lies in its uniqueness, what distinguishes it from all other creatures, the rational image of God (PG 46:53a).

²⁰ Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram libri duodecim* 9, 3.5–6 and *De civitate Dei* 14.22–24.

²¹ Behr, "Rational Animal," 235.

■ Gender, Sexuality, and the Fall

In chapter 16 of *De hominis opificio*, Nyssen explores the seemingly contradictory assertion of Gen 1:27—that God made humankind in his own image yet at the same time created male and female (ἄρσεν καὶ θήλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς) alien to his divine nature. For as Paul says in Galatians 3:28, “In Christ . . . there is neither male nor female.” This paradoxical association of the image of God and something alien to the divine archetype, Nyssen says, teaches a “lofty doctrine”—that humanity represents the “mean,” or midpoint, between the two, created with both the rational, divine nature of God and the non-rational, gendered nature of the beasts.²² The wording of Gen 1:27 suggests that the rational, divine nature “precedes” (προτερεύειν) the division of human beings into male and female.²³ This ordering, however, does not mean that God performed two separate acts of creation. Rather, Moses’ words depict the double aspect of human nature: first, the rational, in common with God and the angels, which he does not differentiate according to gender; and second, the corporeal, in common with non-rational beasts, which he so divides. The qualities of the divine image occur thus “prior” only at the level of God’s intention.

Nyssen explains that Scripture employs the phrase “image of God” to express God’s will that human beings participate in the fullness of God’s goodness: “For if the Deity is the fullness of good, and this is His image, then the image finds its resemblance to the Archetype in being filled with all good”²⁴—by that he means the moral and intellectual virtues, chief among which he includes freedom from necessity, “not in bondage to any natural power.”²⁵ Yet the language of “image” suggests that God made humanity with qualities different from the divine nature: “Now as the image bears in all points the semblance of the archetypal excellence, if it had not a difference in some respect, being absolutely without divergence it would no longer be a likeness, but will in that case manifestly be absolutely identical with the Prototype.”²⁶ The critical difference between human beings and the divine archetype lies in the notion that whereas God constitutes both the source of goodness and eternal duration—goodness therefore inhering in God’s immutable nature—human beings, by the fact of their creation from nothing, remain inherently changeable.²⁷ The Creator foreknew that the mutability inherent in our created nature, combined with the unconstrained freedom of the human will, would lead to the fall and death. Nyssen thus writes: “perceiving beforehand by His power of foreknowledge what

²² *Hom. opif.* 16.9 (NPNF² 5:405, PG 44:181b).

²³ *Ibid.* 16.9 (PG 44:181c).

²⁴ *Ibid.* 16.10 (NPNF² 5:405; PG 44:184b).

²⁵ “μὴ ὑπεξευχθαί τινι φυσικῇ δυναστείᾳ” (*ibid.* 16.11 [NPNF² 5:405; PG 44:184b]).

²⁶ *Ibid.* 16.12 (NPNF² 5:405; PG 44:184c).

²⁷ “For it is very certainly acknowledged that the uncreated nature is also immutable, and always remains the same, while the created nature cannot exist without change; for its very passage from nonexistence to existence is a certain motion and change of the nonexistent transmuted by the Divine purpose into being” (*ibid.* 16.12 [NPNF² 5:405; PG 44:184c]).

... is the tendency of the motion of man's will—as He saw what would be, He devised for His image the distinction of male and female, which has no reference to the Divine Archetype, but, as we have said, is an approximation to the less rational nature.”²⁸ Thus while God added gender as a part of human nature *prior* to the fall, the reason for the addition lay in God's *anticipation* of the fall.²⁹

Behr contends that this passage (16.14) introduces Nyssen's catabatic anthropology, characterized by the overturning (ἐπιστροφή) of reason's proper governing of creation. This overturning of the created order results from “humankind's *appropriation* to the more non-rational nature.”³⁰ Although passion certainly overturned the rule of reason, humanity's failure to follow reason did not give our mode of procreation its bestial character. Rather, Nyssen says, God's fashioning of humanity as male and female, a function of our kinship with the non-rational animals, gave the bestial character to human procreation. One should note, however, that Nyssen does not present the account of God's creation of the double aspect of human nature based on Gen 1:26–27 in neutral terms. Rather, his exegesis grows out of his concern for the discontinuities between the archetypal divine nature and the present state of human nature. He poses a question: “how then is man, this mortal, passible, short-lived being, the image of that nature which is immortal, pure, and everlasting?”³¹ He then introduces his interpretation of Gen 1:27:

Let us turn our inquiry to the question before us—how it is that while the Deity is in bliss, and humanity is in misery, the latter is yet in Scripture called “like” the former?

We must, then, examine the words [of Gen 1:26–27] carefully: for we find, if we do so, that that which was made “in the image” is one thing, and that which is now manifested in wretchedness is another.³²

²⁸ Ibid. 16.14 (NPNF² 5:406; PG 44:185a).

²⁹ Behr argues that for Nyssen, Gen 1:26–27 must be viewed as “unambiguously prelapsarian,” without “even a hint” that God's foreknowledge of the fall influenced God's fashioning of humanity (Behr, “Rational Animal,” 235–36). Behr is correct that in 16.9, where Nyssen describes the distinction between the rational and the non-rational aspects of human nature, he does not mention God's foreknowledge of the fall as the reason for adding gender. Nyssen does, however, make this point later, at 16.14.

³⁰ Behr, “Rational Animal,” 238, emphasis original. Behr's argument rests upon his translation of “τὴν περὶ τὸ ἄρρεν καὶ θῆλυ διαφορὰν . . . τῇ ἀλογωτέρῳ προσωκείωται φύσει” as “the distinction of male and female, which . . . has been appropriated to the more non-rational nature” (237). The word προσωκείωται from προσοικεῖω, according to Liddell and Scott, means “to assign” or “to associate with.” Therefore, the sense would be that the distinction between male and female is *associated with* the non-rational nature of animals rather than the rational nature of God. This is the more straightforward meaning of the term, given the contrast Nyssen is making between the divine image and the non-rational nature.

³¹ *Hom. opif.* 16.4 (NPNF² 5:404; PG 44:180b).

³² Ibid. 16.6–7 (NPNF² 5:405; PG 44:180d–181a).

In articulating the twofold creation of human nature, Scripture “darkly conveys” that we can identify the wretchedness of our present condition with the addition of gender and sexuality—“a thing which is alien from our conceptions of God.”³³

Behr argues that although God foreknew the fall into sin and saw how gender would ensure that the species would not die out once he had imposed the penalty of death, he tied his intention to divide human beings into male and female to our essential kinship with the beasts. Based on Nyssen’s claim that angelic procreation would have occurred in paradise had the fall not occurred, Behr says that the angelic mode does not refer to a specifically asexual mode but rather to procreation fully controlled by reason, that faculty which we share with angels.³⁴ Behr makes a reasonable conclusion—that to have kinship with animals entails being marked for gender. But the text does not support it. Rather, while God divided animals into male and female, he would not have gendered human beings had he not foreknown the fall into sin.

Nyssen says explicitly that sexual reproduction constitutes a necessary and fitting mode of procreation for fallen humanity. The fall into sin entails a reorientation of human desire from those lofty intellectual goods proper to human nature to the sensual goods sought by animals. Having foreknown humanity’s inability to maintain its focus on the divine goods, Nyssen says, God “formed for our nature that contrivance for increase (τῆς αὐξήσεως ἐπίνοιαν) which *befits* those who had fallen into sin (τὴν κατάλληλον τοῖς εἰς ἁμαρτίαν), implanting in mankind, *instead of* (ἀντὶ) the angelic majesty of nature, that animal and non-rational mode by which they now succeed one another.”³⁵ One should notice two important points in this brief passage. First, Nyssen speaks of the “animal and non-rational mode” of procreation as *befitting* those who have fallen into sin. After the fall, human beings oriented themselves toward those sensually appealing goods and so remain driven, like the animals, by the appetites of our non-rational faculties to sensual, material goods. Since the non-rational animals cannot grasp nature’s purposes, God ensured the preservation of species by endowing animals with a mode of procreation that provides a powerful, sensually pleasing inducement for reproducing. Thus sexual intercourse represents a fitting mode of reproduction for those who have fallen, because sexual procreation accommodates the sensual orientation of sin.

At the very end of chapter 17, Nyssen explicitly links the bestial mode of procreation to the hypersensuality of sin and identifies it as the cause of our present misery. Commenting on Ps 48:13 (LXX)—“Man being in honour knew it not; . . . he is compared to the beasts that have no understanding, and made like unto them”—Nyssen explains that the honor, which human beings did not know, resided in the angelic character of their nature, whereas their likeness to cattle lay in their mode of procreation.

³³ Ibid. 16.8 (NPNF² 5:405; PG 44:181a).

³⁴ Behr, “Rational Animal,” 239–45.

³⁵ *Hom. opif.* 17.4 (NPNF² 5:407, emphasis added; PG 44:189c–d).

For [humanity] truly was made like the beasts, who received in his nature the present mode of transient generation, *on account of his inclination to material things* (διὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸ ὑλῶδες ῥοπήν).

For I think that *from this beginning* all our passions issue as from a spring, and pour their flood over man's life; and an evidence of my words is the kinship of passions which appears alike in ourselves and in the brutes; for it is not allowable to ascribe the first beginnings of our constitutional liability to passion to that human nature which was fashioned in the Divine likeness; but as brute life first entered into the world, and man, for the reason already mentioned, took something of their nature (I mean the mode of generation), he accordingly took at the same time a share of the other attributes contemplated in that nature; for the likeness of man to God is not found in anger, nor is pleasure a mark of the superior nature; cowardice also, and boldness, and the desire of gain, and the dislike of loss, and all the like, are far removed from that stamp which indicates Divinity.³⁶

Here Nyssen restates his earlier claim that God made humans like the beasts—equipped for sexual procreation—because of their sensual inclinations. But he also asserts that the passions proceeded from this animal mode of generation. His words at the beginning of chapter 18—“*from this beginning* all our passions issue as from a spring”—suggest that the “beginning” of passion springs from the “inclination to material things” and that this inclination arises specifically from the animal mode of generation.

The list of impulses that constitute this “beginning” (anger, pleasure, cowardice, boldness, desire of gain, dislike of loss, and the like) do not seem to have anything to do with sexual procreation *per se*. Yet he makes the point that human beings took “something of their nature (I mean the mode of generation)” and “a share of the other attributes contemplated in that nature.” The passions arise from those impulses that necessarily accompany the animal mode of procreation. He does not consider the impulses in themselves as bad; on the contrary, he regards them as necessary for the survival of the animals. Yet in human beings, the impulses of animals become passions precisely when they receive direction not from reason but from the uncritical drives of the non-rational faculties:

These attributes, then, human nature took to itself from the side of the brutes; for those qualities with which brute life was armed for self-preservation, when transferred to human life, became passions; for the carnivorous animals are preserved by their anger, and those which breed largely by their love of pleasure. . . . All these and the like affections entered man's composition *through the animal mode of generation* (διὰ τῆς κτηνώδους γενέσεως).³⁷

What does Nyssen mean by saying that “all these and the like affections entered man's composition *through the animal mode of generation*”? One possible reading

³⁶ Ibid. 17.5–18.1 (NPNF² 5:407–8, emphasis added; PG 44:189d–192b).

³⁷ Ibid. 18.2 (NPNF² 5:408, modified and emphasis added; PG 44:192b–c).

may assert that all passions represent expressions of the non-rational appetitive aspect of the soul—desire (ἐπιθυμία), fear, and irascibility, or spirit (θυμός). Therefore, when God gave to human beings the bestial mode of procreation, driven by a desire for sexual pleasure, he necessarily gave them the sensual appetites of the non-rational soul. If Nyssen intends this in fact, then he makes a circular argument: God made humanity male and female and equipped them for a bestial mode of procreation in order to accommodate the sensual hedonism characteristic of fallen humanity; at the same time, God's giving mankind the animal mode of generation from which those passions arise caused the fall into sensual hedonism. This implies that humanity arrives virtually born into a state of fallenness. The last line contains the key point. The love of pleasure—the driving force behind sexual procreation and the impetus for all passions—God gave to humanity along with the capacity for sexual reproduction. The passions arise in human beings because the animal mode of generation exacerbates the soul's sensual orientation, which compromises the intellect's ability to control the non-rational impulses.

Nyssen says clearly that one does not find the fully developed, human passions among the beasts. As Behr notes, the passions—malevolence, envy, deceit, conspiracy, hypocrisy, and the like—result from “the evil husbandry of the mind.”³⁸ These distinctly human sins arise from the mind's voluntary submission to the non-rational impulses. Nyssen writes:

So man seems to me to bear a double likeness to opposite things—being molded in the Divine element of his mind to the Divine beauty, but bearing, in the passionate impulses that arise in him, a likeness to the brute nature; while often even his reason is rendered brutish, and obscures the better element by the worse through its inclination and disposition towards what is non-rational; for whenever a man drags down his mental energy to these affections, and forces his reason to become the servant of his passions, there takes place a sort of conversion of the good stamp in him into the non-rational image, his whole nature being traced anew after that design, as his reason . . . cultivates the beginnings of his passions, and gradually multiplies them; for once it lends its co-operation to passion, it produces a plenteous and abundant crop of evils.³⁹

The non-rational impulses of the soul corrupt the mind by co-opting reason. When the soul submits to non-rational drives, innately oriented toward the material goods apprehended by the senses, it falls into a state of passion. Thus one exchanges the stamp of the divine nature for a likeness to the non-rational animals, because the soul has ceased to participate in the higher goods of God's nature and therefore has lost its likeness to the divine beauty. When the mind turns to the material goods by the love of pleasure, it no longer mirrors the rational order of God's goodness

³⁸ Ibid. 18.4 (*NPNF*² 5:408; PG 44:193b); Behr, “Rational Animal,” 238 and 246.

³⁹ Ibid. 18.3 (*NPNF*² 5:408; PG 44:192d).

and so cannot rightly order the body.⁴⁰ Invoking the metaphor of the mirror in *De virginitate*, Nyssen says that the mind dominated by the passions cannot reflect the divine image any more than a mirror marred by stain can reflect a handsome face.⁴¹ For when the love of the sensual directs the mind to the mundane rather than the eternal, the mind does not enjoy contemplative communion with God and so does not bear likeness to God.

While sins grow out of the sensual orientation that begins with the bestial dimension of human nature, this orientation, combined with the imaginative power of the intellect, leads human beings to seek material goods quantitatively and categorically beyond the scope of those goods desired by non-rational animals. “Thus,” Nyssen concludes, “our love of pleasure took its beginning from our being made like to the non-rational creation, and was increased by the transgressions of men, becoming the parent of so many varieties of sins arising from pleasure as we cannot find among the non-rational animals.”⁴² The present misery of fallen humanity, which stands in discordant juxtaposition with the blessings of the divine image, exceeds the injury caused by the simple desire and irascibility of the beasts.

Nyssen goes on to point out that these same non-rational impulses, the precursors of human passions, become virtues when governed by reason. Desire (ἐπιθυμία) becomes godly love (ἀγάπη); irascibility (θυμός) becomes courage (ἀνδρεία) in the face of temptation.⁴³ In this way, one raises the lower nature, just as Behr argues. That does not necessarily say, however, that God intended these non-rational impulses for human nature irrespective of the fall. In *De anima et resurrectione*, Nyssen, speaking through the voice of Macrina, says that the non-rational faculties of the soul—desire (ἐπιθυμητικόν) and spirit (θυμοειδής)—remain necessary for moral action in the present life but do not, properly speaking, represent components of the soul made in the image of God. Rather, one should view them simply as auxiliary faculties that lie on the soul’s margin:

Since reason conjectures that the divine also, whatever it is by nature, has its existence in these activities of observing everything and distinguishing the good from the bad, but whatever lies on the margin (ἐν μεθορίῳ) of the soul, inclining towards each of the extremes according to its own peculiar nature, which we need when we take a step towards the good or its opposite, for example, anger or fear or any of the other impulses in the soul without which

⁴⁰ “The mind, as being in the image of the most beautiful, itself also remains in beauty and goodness so long as it partakes as far as is possible in its likeness to the archetype; but if it were at all to depart from this it is deprived of that beauty in which it was” (ibid. 12.9 [NPNF² 5:398–99; PG 44:161c]).

⁴¹ Nyssen repeatedly describes the soul beset with sin and passion by comparing it to a shining object (a mirror, water, metal) that is capable of reflecting light as long as it is free of dirt and corrosion. When the external filth is allowed to accumulate, the mirror is unable to reflect a true image, and the metal loses its beauty (see *Virg.* 11–12).

⁴² *Hom. opif.* 18.4 (NPNF² 5:408; PG 44:193a).

⁴³ Ibid. 18.5 (NPNF² 5:408; PG 44:193b).

human nature cannot reflect, these we consider externals because they are not perceived in the beauty of the archetype.⁴⁴

In other words, the intellectual faculties of the soul enable us to participate in and enjoy the blessings of the divine nature, while the non-rational faculties of the soul serve the mundane purpose of *acting* in the world. When reason controls the non-rational faculties, the resulting moral good can serve the contemplative ends of the soul's ascent to God.

Returning then to Nyssen's explanation of the human mode of reproduction in chapter 17.4—that God “formed for our nature that contrivance for increase which *befits* those who had fallen into sin . . .”—we note the second important point in Nyssen's statement that God “implant[ed] in mankind, *instead of* the angelic majesty of nature, that animal and non-rational mode [of procreation].” Here Nyssen answers the question of how human beings would have procreated, had they not fallen. Had God known that humans would remain turned toward the intelligible goods proper to their nature, he would have equipped the human form with the mechanism that allows for asexual procreation among the angels. Since God foreknew our fall and our sensual orientation akin to the animals, however, he gave humans a mode of procreation like the animals: “God contrived for His work the distinction of male and female.”⁴⁵ Nyssen's significant contrast between the animal mode of procreation and the angelic nature suggests an alternative form of human embodiment. Contrary to Behr's insistence that gender and sexual reproduction remain essential to human nature as the perfect synthesis of the rational and animal natures, Nyssen says explicitly that the structure of the human body could have and would have taken another form had human history been on track for a different destiny. In other words, humanity could represent the union of the rational, divine nature of angels with the sentient, material nature of animals without incorporating into the human body all the functions and capacities of the animals. Nyssen regards this as true in two ways. First, although mankind forms the midpoint between the divine and the animals, God intentionally did not give to human beings the natural powers of speed or covering or strength or “weaponry” (e.g., horns or claws or venom).⁴⁶ Even as human beings obtain food and defend themselves by different means than do animals, so too might they procreate differently. Second, and more importantly, the human body in the resurrection will transform into the angelic nature that God intended from the beginning, while at the same time retain the material composition of the animal-like body. To understand

⁴⁴ *Anim. et res.* (Fathers of the Church [FC] 58:220–21; PG 46:57c).

⁴⁵ *Hom. opif.* 17.4 (NPNF² 5:407; PG 44:189c).

⁴⁶ This dissimilarity, Nyssen explains, was intended to force human beings to exert dominion over the animals through reason, by means of domestication or technology—turning the ox into a beast of burden, for example, or the dog into a “live sword” (see *Hom. opif.* 7.3 [NPNF² 5:392–93; PG 44:141c–144a]).

this point, one must examine Nyssen's treatment of the relationship between the angelic nature and the body of the resurrection.

■ The Angelic Life and the Body of the Resurrection

In his preface to *De hominis opificio*, Nyssen writes: "For it is necessary to know those things concerning man which came to be—of that which we believe to have come to be, of that which we expect to appear later, and of that which is now seen and leave nothing unexamined."⁴⁷ The wording of this passage seems curious; for, Nyssen divides his discussion of human beings into humankind in the past, then in the future, and finally in the present. This grouping of the past and the future together followed by the present shows that Nyssen identifies God's original purpose for humanity in the beginning with humanity's eschatological destiny, in contradistinction from humanity in the present: "Now the resurrection promises us nothing else than the restoration of the fallen to their ancient state; for the grace we look for is a certain return to the first life, bringing back again to Paradise him who was cast out from it."⁴⁸ His equation of the creation in the beginning with the eschaton echoes Origen's principle of ἀποκατάστασις—the end shall resemble the beginning. For this reason, Nyssen asserts, we can understand God's creative intention for humanity in the beginning by understanding the nature of the resurrection. Nyssen does acknowledge that any eschatological speculation must begin with the caveat that the precise nature of the resurrection body lies outside the scope of our present experience and knowledge. Although he considers Christ's resurrection as paradigmatic of our resurrection—as a bodily resurrection—Paul's metaphors of "the house not made with hands" (2 Cor 5:1–2) and the transformation of the grain (1 Cor 15:42–44) imply the body of the resurrection changes into a form more glorious than our present bodies. Since the resurrection will bring a transformation of the body into something different than the body as we know it now, Nyssen resists making definitive pronouncements about that which necessarily remains "completely hidden and unknown."⁴⁹ Nevertheless, while not dogmatic as to the exact nature of the resurrection body, Nyssen does venture some suggestions as to the qualities of the resurrection based on his reading of certain key apocalyptic passages from Scripture.

One of the key apocalyptic texts, Jesus' description of "children of the resurrection" as "equal to the angels" (Luke 20:35–36), becomes paradigmatic for Nyssen's understanding of the resurrection. Thus, he says, "if . . . the life of those restored is

⁴⁷ Ibid. preface (PG 44:128a). Henry A. Wilson's translation in *NPNF* alters the order of the Greek giving it the linear temporal ordering of past-present-future. Such a rendering misses Nyssen's point. I am grateful to Rowan Greer for pointing this out to me.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 17.2 (*NPNF*² 5:407; PG 44:187d).

⁴⁹ *De mortuis*. (Gregorii Nysseni Opera IX [Leiden: Brill, 1967] 62.9–18) quoted in Brian E. Daley, "'The Human Form Divine': Christ's Risen Body and Ours According to Gregory of Nyssa" (forthcoming).

closely related to that of the angels, it is clear that the life before the transgression was a kind of angelic life, and hence also our return to the ancient condition of our life is compared to the angels.”⁵⁰ Nyssen repeatedly speaks of the resurrection as a “restoration” or a “return” to the angelic life.

One should not, however, interpret the language of restoration (ἀποκατάστασις or ἐπάνοδος) to mean that the resurrection indicates simply a return to Eden. As Brian Daley has observed, the “restoration to our ancient state” does not refer to some prehistorical existence; rather, it means “the actual perfection or ‘fullness’ of the rational creature’s possible reality, eternally present in the mind of God, a σκόπος or goal that pre-exists the human race’s historical journey and becomes realized in creatures gradually in time.”⁵¹ Thus the resurrection brings the fulfillment of the germinally perfect form, or nature, fashioned according to the divine image that God created potentially at the level of his will and foreknowledge before his actual making of Adam.⁵² The only sense in which the resurrection represents a true restoration of humanity’s historical past arises from the notion that God will free the body of the resurrection from the effects of sin. Comparing the resurrection to the cleansing of the leper Naaman the Syrian in the river Jordan, Nyssen says that “the deformity of sickness takes possession of the form [of the body] like some strange mask, and when this is removed by the word, . . . the form that had been hidden by disease is once more by means of health restored to sight again with its own marks of identity.”⁵³ The form (εἶδος) here does not refer to universal human nature but to the distinctive form of each individual preserved in the soul, which orders the body’s scattered bits of matter to that form. He makes the critical point that the body restored will resemble the body of Eden only as a pristine material body devoid of the effects of sin.

Nyssen elsewhere identifies aspects of Eden that God will restore in the resurrection—the tree of life, the original grace of the image and dignity of rule—yet he says explicitly that we hope *not* for those things given to humanity by God for the “necessary uses of life” but rather for the things of a kingdom of ineffable mystery.⁵⁴ As does Origen, Nyssen appeals to Paul’s analogy of the grain and body of corruption in 1 Cor 15:42. Even as the plant that emerges from the buried grain

⁵⁰ *Hom. opif.* 17.2 (NPNF² 5:407; PG 44:187d).

⁵¹ Brian E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 85–86. Morwenna Ludlow concurs: “Gregory’s idea of the perfection of human kind is more a forward-looking attainment of an ideal than a retrospective restoration to an actual previous state.” (*Universal Salvation: Eschatology in the Thought of Gregory of Nyssa and Karl Rahner* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000] 43).

⁵² See Johannes Zachhuber’s discussion of *De hominis opificio* 16 and 22 in *Human Nature in Gregory of Nyssa: Philosophical and Background Theological Significance* (Boston: Brill, 1999) 154–59.

⁵³ *Hom. opif.* 27.4 (NPNF² 5:418; PG 44:225d–228a).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 21.4 (NPNF² 5:411; PG 44:204a). Nyssen repeats the reference to the restoration of our primal grace, i.e., the beauty of the divine image untarnished by sin, in *Anim. et res.* (PG 46:156d).

produces “the same species . . . born again as had grown in the beginning,” but in radically glorified appearance, so too humanity of the resurrection reproduces its state in Eden, but changed into something more magnificent.⁵⁵ Thus resurrected humanity will resemble humanity according to the divine image as God willed it in the beginning, free from non-rational impulses given in accommodation of the impending fall. Consequently, the angelic life of the resurrection cannot suit the life of animals, then perfectly governed and ordered by reason, as Behr argues. Rather, for Nyssen, the angelic life of the resurrection means a life oriented not at all to the sensual but to God, whose life-giving power sustains human beings in body and soul.

Nyssen grounds his understanding of the transformation of our earthly bodies into spiritual or angelic bodies upon his ontology of quality. Rather than basing his anthropology on a hylemorphic theory of substance (i.e., prime matter given identity by the imposition of form), Nyssen sees human beings as a collection of intelligible properties or qualities (ποιότητες).⁵⁶ This does not say that he abandons the concept of matter. As in his discussion of the incarnation in *Antirrheticus adversus Apollinarium* 54, Nyssen uses the term ὅλη to refer, not just to the matter of the body, but to the whole person, body and soul, which Christ took from Mary’s womb.⁵⁷ This ontology of quality lays the foundation for Nyssen’s accounts of the resurrection and of our divinization in this life. As a collection of intelligible qualities, which can change, a human being can, by contemplative participation in God and asceticism, take on the divine qualities or attributes of God. So too in the resurrection, the creative powers of God change the qualities of the body, and the soul whose vision of the divine communicates the divine qualities of purity and incorruptibility to the body sustains it. Since “one grace will shine upon all,” all will transform into homogeneous bodies, which will manifest the virtues and grace of Christ, who shines upon us, and in whom we participate.⁵⁸ This understanding of the communication of qualities by contemplative participation constitutes the central grounds for his conception of the angelic life and thus the life of the resurrection.

At the end of chapter 18, Nyssen appeals to the model of the angelic life to describe the character of the divine image restored in humanity eschatologically. He addresses the imagined objection of someone who “feels shame at the fact that our [present] life, like that of the brutes, is sustained by food, and for this reason deems man unworthy of being supposed to have been framed in the image of God.” Such an objection assumes an incongruity between our shared life with the beasts, in which food sustains us, and the life characteristic of one made in the image of

⁵⁵ *Anim. et res.* (FC 58:270; PG 46:156c).

⁵⁶ Richard Sorabji, *Matter, Space, and Motion: Theories in Antiquity and their Sequel* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988) 52–55 quoted in Daley, “Human Form Divine,” 6.

⁵⁷ See Daley’s very helpful discussion in “Human Form Divine,” 6–7.

⁵⁸ *De mortuis* (Gregorii Nysseni Opera 9, 65.13–66.16) in Daley, “Human Form Divine,” 16.

a God, who does not need food. According to the logic of Behr's reading, Nyssen should simply reply: humanity as the midpoint of creation must share with the beasts a nature nourished by food—for that remains essential to the animal nature humanity possesses. Unlike the beasts, however, reason controls humans' appetite for food. Therefore, our shared mode of sustenance should not cause shame. This, however, Nyssen does not reply. To begin with, he does not dismiss the suggestion that we should feel shame at being like the non-rational animals. Rather, he accepts the premise that this form of animal nature represents less than what God originally intended for humanity. In fact, freedom from this aspect of animal nature remains part of our eschatological destiny.

But he [i.e., the person feeling shame] may expect that freedom from this function [i.e., eating] will one day be bestowed upon our nature in the life we look for; for, as the Apostle says, "the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink;" and the Lord declared that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Further, as the resurrection holds forth to us a life equal with the angels (ἰσάγγελον), and with the angels there is no food, there is sufficient ground for believing that man, who will live in like fashion with the angels, will be released from such a function.⁵⁹

Nyssen's position has clear logic. In the resurrection we shall cease resembling the beasts sustained by food; instead, as creatures bearing the uncompromised image of God, we shall resemble the angels, sustained by the word of God, the object of our eternal adoration and contemplation. Since human beings will derive an immortal existence from their contemplative participation in God's eternal and incorruptible being, no need for the non-rational faculties currently necessary for our survival individually and as a species will arise. Even as we shall have no need for eating or drinking to sustain the human body, neither shall we have a need for sexual reproduction to perpetuate the human race.

Nyssen's suggestion that our contemplative participation in God will sustain us eschatologically reflects his view of the soul's mediatorial role in relation to the body. Earlier in *De hominis opificio*, he explains that as the soul acts as a mirror that reflects or possesses the qualities of the object of its contemplation, so too the body functions as a "mirror of the mirror" and reflects the qualities of the soul. Thus the mind, when set upon God, conforms to the beauty of God's virtues and transmits that beauty to the body, which it rules.⁶⁰ Nyssen may well draw on the Plotinian view of the mediatorial role of the soul in giving form to matter. Plotinus explains that Mind, or νοῦς, apprehends the unitary beauty of the One as a multiplicity of ideas or forms. When the soul unites with νοῦς in contemplation of the One, it communicates the beauty of the One to the material body by imposing form on matter. Thus the soul can rightly govern the body and give it its proper form

⁵⁹ *Hom. opif.* 18.9 (NPNF² 5:409; PG 44:196a–b).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 12.9 (NPNF² 5:399; PG 44:161c–d).

and beauty, only as long as it actively participates in the One through contemplation.⁶¹ This may indeed reflect the logic of Nyssen's view of directed participation. When the soul unites with God in contemplation, it receives life and beauty by participating in God, who represents life itself. This divine life transmits in turn to the body.⁶² In this way the soul's communion with God, not physical nourishment, sustains the body.

This view of angelic humanity of the resurrection appears fully consistent with the account Nyssen gives of the resurrection in another work, *De anima et resurrectione*, written about the same time as *De hominis opificio*. The body of the resurrection, he says, will remain the very body that we have possessed in this life, restored with all the elements as well as the form it had during this life.⁶³ Although Nyssen does not say explicitly, he implies that the bodies of the resurrection will retain the phenotypic features that marked it for gender in this life. In the eschaton, however, when God becomes "all and in all," we shall use neither the sexual organs nor the organs used for eating and digesting food; no one will need to eat or to drink or to procreate, since our participation in God will sustain our lives. Contrasting this life with that to come, he writes:

Our present life is lived by us in varied and multifarious ways. We partake of many things, such as time, air, place, eating and drinking, the light of the sun, lamplight, and the many other necessities of life, and God is none of these. However, the blessedness we look forward to requires none of them and, instead of these, the divine nature will become everything to us imparting itself harmoniously to every need of that life. This is clear from sacred pronouncements which tell us that God becomes a place to those who are worthy and a home and a garment and nourishment and drink and light and wealth and a kingdom and every idea and name we have for what makes up the good life.⁶⁴

Following this view to its logical conclusion, he admits that if our direct participation in God sustains our whole being, then we shall not need even those organs (such as heart, liver, brain, lungs, stomach) that constitute "the life-giving cause

⁶¹ Once the soul becomes distracted and immersed in the material world, which does not inherently possess form or beauty, it can no longer communicate form and beauty to the body. See Plotinus, *Enneads* 1.6.2 and 4.8.6.

⁶² "Thus so long as one [i.e., mind] keeps in touch with the other [i.e., God], the communication of the true beauty extends proportionally through the whole series [including the body], beautifying by the superior nature that which comes next to it; but when there is any interruption of this beneficent connection, or when, on the contrary, the superior [i.e., the mind] comes to follow the inferior [i.e., the body], then is displayed the misshapen character of matter, when it is isolated from nature (for in itself matter is a thing without form or structure), and by its shapelessness is also destroyed that beauty of nature with which it is adorned through the mind" (*Hom. opif.* 12.10 [NPNF² 5:399; PG 44:161d]).

⁶³ The soul remains with all the elements of the body, dispersed though they are, so that they may come together at the resurrection (*Anim. et res.* [PG 46:44c–d and 73b–77b]).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* (FC 58:243–44; PG 46:104b–c).

and power” of the body. Moreover, on the sustained assumption that no marriage will take place in the resurrection, Nyssen observes: “If for the sake of marriage there are parts which pertain to marriage, when marriage no longer exists, we will have no need of those parts.”⁶⁵ Behr construes Nyssen’s interpretation of Jesus’ statement about marriage and the resurrection to mean that no marital union will occur for the sake of repopulation as a result of death. But this, he says, leaves open the possibility that marriage and sexual union may continue in the resurrection without procreation as its objective.⁶⁶ In this passage, however, Nyssen, far from suggesting that sexual relations will take place governed by reason, states simply that there will be no need of sexual organs. He thereby rules out their use for procreation or any other purpose. Even the non-rational faculties of desire and spirit, on which the soul relies in this life to “lead us to the beautiful,” will have no use, when God becomes “all and in all.”⁶⁷ Rather, we shall rely solely upon the contemplative faculties (θεωρητική). Then the sheer enjoyment (ἀπόλαυσις) of the God immediately present to the soul will replace our desire (ἐπιθυμία) for God.⁶⁸ As the character of our experience of our relationship with God changes in the resurrection, so will the character of our love. In *De anima et resurrectione*, Nyssen speaks of our present love as ἔρως and our love of God in the eschaton as ἀγάπη.⁶⁹ In whatever way our eschatological love retains some qualities of ἔρως, it will become qualitatively different than our erotic longings in the present life.

This understanding of the resurrection as an angelic existence free from the sensual erotic desires and the need for sexual reproduction lies at the foundation of Nyssen’s ascetic ideal. He maintains that the Christian life in the present not only anticipates the resurrection in hope but strives to embody the angelic life of the resurrection through asceticism and sexual renunciation. Nyssen takes as the exemplar of the ascetic life—life ordered according to a philosophical regimen which separates the soul from the desires of the body—his elder sister, Macrina, to whom he often refers as simply ἡ παρθένος, “the virgin.” Impelled by the death of the man to whom her parents had betrothed her, Macrina entered the life of virginity. After the death of her father, Basil the Elder, Macrina persuaded her mother to allow her to convert the family estate at Pontus into a monastic community for female virgins. Through her life of perpetual chastity and the renunciation of

⁶⁵ Ibid. (FC 58:264; PG 46:144c–145a).

⁶⁶ Behr, “Rational Animal,” 246.

⁶⁷ *Anim. et res.* (FC 58:237; PG 46:89b–c).

⁶⁸ Ibid. (PG 46:89b–c). In later works, such as *De vita Moysis* and *Commentarius in Canticum Canticorum*, Nyssen revises this view, insisting that even eschatologically we will be guided by a holy desire for God. Erotic longing, in fact, necessarily characterizes humanity’s relationship with God because there will always be a “distance” between the creature and the creator. See J. Warren Smith, *Passion and Paradise: Human and Divine Emotion in the Thought of Gregory of Nyssa* (New York, N.Y.: Crossroad, 2004) 202–16.

⁶⁹ As is typical, Nyssen is not fully consistent in this regard and at places uses ἀγάπη as synonymous with ἐπιθυμία. See *Anim. et res.* (FC 58: 224 and 240; PG 146: 64c and 96b).

childbearing, Nyssen says, Macrina transcended her nature as woman.⁷⁰ He does not mean by this that she became male. Rather, she reclaimed that pure humanity made in the image of God, free from the accretion of sexuality.⁷¹ Nyssen describes her celibate withdrawal from the desires of the body as “an imitation of the existence of the angels.”⁷² In fact, his language here reminds one of the view in *De hominis opificio* that humanity represents the midpoint between the life of rational and non-rational creatures: “their [i.e., the virgins’] existence bordered on both the human and the incorporeal nature. . . . A nature freed from human cares is more than human, whereas, to appear in the body and to be embraced by form and to live with the senses is to have a nature less than angelic and incorporeal.”⁷³ In other words, Macrina, whose life in the present age was characterized by dependence on food for sustenance and by bodily weakness and suffering, lacked the full blessedness of the angels. At the same time, she had a life “more than human,” because through her virginity she transcended the bodily preoccupations of the present life and proleptically embraced the angelic life of the resurrection.⁷⁴ Here *De vita Macrinae* appears consistent with *De hominis opificio*. Gender and sexuality do not constitute essential components of human nature that will continue to play a significant role for us eschatologically; rather, the celibate life enables the Christian to rise above the corporeal distractions of gender and sexuality and so to possess

⁷⁰ *V. Macr.* 1.10–12 (Sources chrétiennes [SC] 178:138).

⁷¹ For an extended discussion of the relationship between Nyssen’s anthropology in *De hominis opificio* and his treatment of gender, see Verna E. F. Harrison, “Male and Female in Cappadocian Theology,” *JTS* n.s. 41 (1990) 465–71; and J. Warren Smith, “A Just and Reasonable Grief: The Death and Function of a Holy Woman in Gregory of Nyssa’s *Life of Macrina*,” *JECS* 12 (2004) 57–84.

⁷² “Just as by death souls are freed from the body and released from the cares of this life, so their life was separated from these things, divorced from all mortal vanity and attuned to an imitation of the existence of the angels” (*V. Macr.* 11.16–20 [FC 58:170–71; SC 178:176]). Nyssen here is drawing on the language of Plato’s *Phaedo* (64b–e) that views the philosophical life as the separation of the soul from the body in this life in anticipation of the soul’s ultimate, blessed liberation from the flesh at the time of death. One should not assume, however, that Nyssen in this text has abandoned the Christian belief in the resurrection of the body in favor of the Platonic view of immortality (the soul’s disembodied existence in the eternal realm). See his discussion of the resurrection in *V. Macr.* 5.14 and 24.15 (SC 178:156 and 218).

⁷³ *V. Macr.* 11.36–40 (FC 58:171; SC 178:178–80).

⁷⁴ The clearest statement of her strength in virtue comes in Nyssen’s account of Macrina and their mother’s hearing the news of the death of Macrina’s younger brother Naucratus. While her mother was overcome with grief and fainted, “Macrina’s excellence was evident. By setting reason against passion, she kept herself in hand, and, becoming a bulwark of her mother’s weakness, she lifted her out of the abyss of grief, and, by her own firmness and unyielding spirit, she trained her mother’s soul to be courageous. . . . Macrina’s life became for her mother a guide towards the philosophical and unworldly way of life, and, turning her aside from all that she was used to, she led her to her own standard of simplicity” (*V. Macr.* 10.1–6 and 11.5–13 [FC 58:169–70; SC 178:172 and 174–76]). Given Nyssen’s depiction of Macrina’s virtue and self-mastery, it is hard to see his praise of virginity in *De virginitate* as being ironic. This account of Macrina’s life does not accord with Hart’s interpretation of *De virginitate* that the celibate life is the resort of those too weak of character and virtue to be able to hold in balance marriage and the life of contemplation.

the contemplative life of one endowed with the *imago Dei*, which, for Nyssen, represents the essence of human nature.⁷⁵

■ Conclusion: The Essential Disunity of Nyssen's Anthropology

We find Behr's reading of Nyssen's anthropology attractive precisely because it reconciles the confusing and contradictory lines of Nyssen's thought. Unfortunately, however, this interpretation imposes a coherence on Nyssen's anthropology—a vision of humanity in which the rational and the corporeal natures appear fully integrated—that the text does not support. Nyssen, as Origen, writes as both a speculative theologian and rhetorician who has more interest in using suggestive language to explore the range of possibilities within the divine economy implied by Scripture than in laying out a systematic and fully coherent description of that which remains veiled in mystery. As we have seen, Nyssen portrays the angelic nature as paradigmatic for human life as God willed it both in the beginning and in the resurrection. The body of the resurrection indicates a transformed body having no physical needs and contributing in no way to the soul's communion with God. Although the resurrected body will retain all the physical characteristics that constitute our identity in the present life—including organs of digestion, respiration, sensation, reproduction, and so on—these features will serve no purpose in the resurrection. The angelic character of the resurrection refers to communion with God akin to the life of angels, who sustain themselves by contemplative and doxological participation in God. In the resurrection, when God will become “all and in all,” human beings, like the angels, will gain immortality by feeding upon “every word that proceeds from the mouth of God,” who will sustain us as food and air and light and life itself. Consequently, no one will need to eat or to engage in sexual intercourse. This, Nyssen insists, constitutes humanity's eschatological destiny. Moreover, since the end shall resemble the beginning, the angelic life of the resurrection actualizes God's intention for humanity from the beginning.

This conclusion may leave modern interpreters scratching their heads and asking (as did Nyssen himself) why the resurrected body would include physical features of which we shall have no need. Yet this understanding of the angelic life of the resurrection—for all of its apparent contradictions—remains important for two key aspects of Nyssen's thought. First, Nyssen's whole ascetic theology rests upon his understanding of the angelic life as the fulfillment of God's creative purpose for humanity. His praise of the life of virginity and of virgins such as Macrina makes sense only when one sees it in the light of his understanding of the angelic character of the resurrection. The virgin, through sexual renunciation, transcends her gender—this accommodation of human fallenness alien to the divine image—and embraces the philosophical life proper for rational creatures made in God's image.

⁷⁵ Nyssen is explicit that the essence of something is that which is distinctive about it; in the case of human beings, the distinctive feature is the *imago Dei* (*Anim. et res.* [PG 46:53a]).

In this way, the virgin enters proleptically into the angelic life of the resurrection. This explains why the celibate life, for Nyssen, represents both a radical break from the ordinary life in the world and a hopeful reorientation of that life toward our eschatological destiny.

Second, the seeming contradictions surrounding Nyssen's discussion of gender, the fall, and the angelic life of the resurrection expose a fault line in his soteriology that he never fully overcomes. Two soteriological concerns influence Nyssen's anthropology: first, the redemption of the material body from corruption and death, and second, the purification and perfection of the soul in the image of God. Yet neither in his earlier works, such as *De anima et resurrectione* or *De hominis opificio*, nor in his later works, such as *De vita Moysis* or *Commentarius in Canticum Canticorum*, does he integrate his account of the resurrection with his account of the soul's participation in God. Unlike Origen, for whom the material body comprises a mere epiphenomenon, useful only as a place of convalescence for the fallen *voûς*, Nyssen insists that the material nature of the body must survive in the eschaton. One might then reasonably expect him to give it the same sacramental function in the resurrection for which God made it in the beginning: to enable us to see God's goodness and beauty in creation. Nyssen, however, does not conclude this. Unlike Augustine, who says that the saints in the eschaton will eat and enjoy the physical fruits of Paradise (though they will not need to eat in order to live) and will "see" God in the glorified bodies of the other saints,⁷⁶ Nyssen says explicitly that no eating or drinking or having sex or any other physical activity will take place in the eschaton. He might have concluded that in the resurrection God will become "all and in all" in the sense that in all things we shall discern God's omnipresent indwelling and thus allow the redeemed material world to mediate God's presence. Instead, Nyssen insists that God's nature will become all things to us, and solely our contemplative participation in God will sustain us. Thus, Nyssen places primary emphasis on the spiritual redemption of the soul, not the physical redemption of the body.

Interestingly enough, Nyssen remains conscious of this incongruity between his account of the resurrection body and his view of the soul's angelic participation in God. Toward the end of the dialogue *De anima et resurrectione*, Nyssen objects that in Macrina's account of the resurrection, God raises the body to little purpose. Specifically, on the restoration of genitalia in the resurrection, he comments: "If it is true, as it certainly is, that there is no provision for marriage in the life after the resurrection and that our life then will not depend on eating or drinking, what use will the parts of the body be, since in that life we no longer expect these activi-

⁷⁶ Augustine, *Civ.* 22.29. For an extended discussion of Augustine's eschatology, see Daley, *Hope of the Early Church*, 131–50; and Rowan A. Greer, *Christian Hope and Christian Life: Raids on the Inarticulate* (New York, N.Y.: Crossroad, 2001) 112–60.

ties for whose sake the parts of the body now exist?"⁷⁷ While conceding that her brother, through skilled rhetoric, has raised reasonable objections from a worldly perspective, Macrina dismisses these objections on the ground that they do not appear rooted in the hidden mysteries of the age to come: "The true reasoning on these matters is stored in the hidden treasures of wisdom and will come into the open only when we have experienced the mystery of the resurrection."⁷⁸ In other words, Nyssen confesses, through the voice of his sister, that for the present time being we must accept certain necessary, though paradoxical, claims of the faith—here, that a resurrection of this material body will occur and that our lives will derive from our participation in God—trusting that only in the resurrection will the divine logic become apparent.

While modern readers may find it frustrating that Nyssen never fully integrates his accounts of the resurrection body and the soul's angelic life of the eschaton, we may find it helpful to remember that *De hominis opificio*, as *De anima et resurrectione*, constitutes a work of θεωρία (like Origen's *De principiis* or Basil's *Hexaemeron*)—a speculative work that does not offer a single, unified portrait of human nature but rather explores the many possible trajectories suggested by Scripture.⁷⁹ In the end, Nyssen has a kaleidoscopic anthropology: by twists and turns, it reveals strikingly different insights into a mystery too great to grasp in its entirety or to express as a unity.

⁷⁷ Having voiced this objection, Nyssen falls back to a posture of pious submission to the teachings of the Church: "If a complete resurrection occurs, the one bringing it about wills what is vain and useless for our life then. However, it is necessary to believe that there is a resurrection and that it is not futile. Therefore, we should direct our attention to preserving the reasonableness of all the details of the dogma" (*Anim. et res.* [FC 58:264; PG 46:145a]).

⁷⁸ Ibid. (FC 58:265; PG 46:145a).

⁷⁹ *Hom. opif.* preface (NPNF² 5:387; PG 44:128a)

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Yonton Revisited: A Case Study in the Reception of Hellenistic Science within Early Judaism

Alexander Toepel
University of Tübingen

In the Syriac *Book of the Cave of Treasures*, which in a general way we may reckon among the rewritten Bible texts, in ch. 27.6–11, an apocryphal fourth son of Noah appears, Yōnṭōn by name.¹ This figure resides near the seashore in a far-eastern land and possesses oracular and astrological wisdom. In 1980, Stephen Gero interpreted this figure against a Jewish background.² Recently, however, Clemens Leonhard, following Witold Witakowski, has questioned this approach and denied any prehistory to Yōnṭōn; he regards him as an “invention” of the Syriac author of the *Cave of*

¹ Scholars commonly date *Cave of Treasures* to the 6th c. C.E. and believe that a Christian author in northern Mesopotamia wrote it; see Peter Bruns, “Spelunca Thesaurorum/Schatzhöhle,” in *Lexikon der antiken christlichen Literatur* (ed. Siegmund Döpp and Wilhelm Geerlings; 3d ed.; Freiburg i. Br.: Herder, 2002) 650. For arguments that favor a date towards the end of the 6th or early 7th centuries, see ch. 1 “Einleitung” of the author’s forthcoming doctoral thesis *Die Adam- und Sethlegenden im syrischen Buch der Schatzhöhle* (CSCO 618, Subsidia 119; Louvain: Peeters, 2006). The classification of the *Cave of Treasures* as a rewritten Bible text follows from the book’s similarity to works which undoubtedly belong to this genre, such as the *Book of Jubilees* or the pseudo-Philonian *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, as Gary A. Anderson has noted (“The Cosmic Mountain. Eden and Its Early Interpreters in Syriac Christianity,” in *Genesis 1–3 in the History of Exegesis* [ed. Gregory A. Robbins; Studies in Women and Religion 27; Lewiston, N.Y.: Mellen, 1988] 214, n. 8).

² Stephen Gero, “The Legend of the Fourth Son of Noah,” *HTR* 73 (1980) 321–30. The name “Yōnṭōn” does not actually appear in Jewish sources. Gero inferred the legend’s Jewish origin from a peculiar exegesis of Gen 9:24 in the Babylonian Talmud, *Sanh.* fol. 70a. Here Ham’s crime against the drunken Noah consists in castrating him in order to prevent Noah from begetting a fourth son. Similarly the Midrash *Gen. Rab.* 36.7 asserts, without mentioning the castration, that Ham prevented Noah from begetting a fourth son; see *ibid.*, 321–22. Combining this with the appearance of Yōnṭōn in the *Cave of Treasures*, Gero concluded that the Talmudic and Midrashic accounts refer polemically

Treasures.³ In the present article I aim to investigate whether it is possible indeed to trace a Jewish origin of Yōnṭōn's appearance in the *Cave of Treasures*. Taking Gero's interpretation as a starting point, I will first investigate the setting in which a figure like Yōnṭōn could have evolved within a Jewish context. Secondly, I will attempt to actually identify Yōnṭōn in earlier Jewish sources. In this I will follow a recent assertion of Su-Min Ri, that Yōnṭōn originates in the Biblical person of Yoqṭān (Gen 10:25).⁴ While Ri's assumption derives from the possibility of a misspelling, I will produce internal evidence which renders the identification of Yōnṭōn and Yoqṭān very probable, thus justifying the direction of thought taken by both Gero and Ri over against the allegations of Leonhard and Witakowski. Moreover, the following discussion will shed light on how Jews received influences from Hellenistic astronomy and astrology and how they read these concepts into, or set them in opposition to, the Bible.

In earlier Jewish writings, two Biblical personages appear in possession of astrological and oracular knowledge. In the *Book of Jubilees* ch. 8.1–4, Kainan, a grandson of Shem, discovers an inscription with astrological content that the fallen angels have written; according to Josephus's *Jewish Antiquities* 1.69–71, the descendants of Seth erect two stelae containing a prediction of the flood and conflagration.⁵ In order to elucidate the legend of Yōnṭōn in the *Cave of Treasures*, I quote both passages here in full and analyze them with regard to their place within Judaism in the age of Hellenism and Late Antiquity.

The account in *Jubilees* 8.1–4 runs as follows:⁶

^{8.1}In the twenty-ninth jubilee, in the first week—at its beginning—Arpachshad married a woman named Rasueya, the daughter of Susan, the daughter of

to a fourth son of Noah, whom they believed to possess astrological knowledge; see *ibid.*, 327–30. Since the authorities quoted in the relevant passages of Talmud and Midrash belong to the 3rd and 4th centuries, this motif must considerably antedate the *Cave of Treasures*, which preserves it in its original form, while the Rabbinic sources succeeded in erasing almost every memory of it.

³ Clemens Leonhard, "Observations on the Date of the Syriac *Cave of Treasures*," in *Studies in Language and Literature in Honour of Paul-Eugène Dion* (ed. P. M. Michèle Daviau, John W. Wevers and Michael Weigl; vol. 3 of *The World of the Aramaeans*; JSOTSup 326; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) 287–88, and n. 112. Leonhard here refers to Witold Witakowski, "The Division of the Earth Between the Descendants of Noah in the Syriac Tradition," *Aram* 5 (1993) 635–56, at 641 and 648, who, likewise without further discussion, asserts that the author of *Cave of Treasures* "invented" Yōnṭōn.

⁴ Su-Min Ri, *Commentaire de la Caverne des Trésors. Étude sur l'histoire du texte et de ses sources*. (CSCO 581, Subsidia 103; Louvain: Peeters, 2000) 341–57, at 356.

⁵ Similar motifs also appear in such medieval works as the *Book of Jashar* and the *Chronicles of Jerahmeel*; see Thomas W. Franxman, *Genesis and the Jewish Antiquities of Flavius Josephus* (BibOr 35; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979) 79–80. I do not treat these later sources here because they do not yield information on the motif's use *before* the *Cave of Treasures* was written.

⁶ I take this translation from *The Book of Jubilees: A Critical Text* (ed. and trans. James C. VanderKam; CSCO 511; Scriptores aethiopici 88; Louvain: Peeters, 1989) 50–51. Scholars commonly date the *Book of Jubilees* to the time immediately after the Maccabean revolt; see

Elam. She gave birth to a son for him in the third year of this week, and he named him Kainan. ²When the boy grew up, his father taught him (the art of) writing. He went to look for a place of his own where he could possess his own city. ³He found an inscription which the ancients had incised in a rock. He read what was in it, copied it, and sinned on the basis of what was in it, since it was the Watchers' teaching by which they used to observe the omens of the sun, moon, and stars and every heavenly sign. ⁴He wrote (it) down but told no one about it because he was afraid to tell Noah about it lest he become angry at him about it.

This reveals a pronounced negative attitude towards astrology, in accord with the book's generally hostile stand against Hellenism.⁷ The *Book of Jubilees* here attributes the ability to interpret stellar oracles to the "Watchers," that is, the fallen angels of ch. 5.1–2, 6, who are responsible for the introduction of magical arts and, through their marriages with human women, for the birth of the antediluvian giants and the bloodshed they caused. A comparison of the account quoted above with the reports of pagan authors on the origins of alchemical and other occult knowledge shows that the author of the *Book of Jubilees* refers in this passage specifically to the arcane sciences of his Hellenistic environment. Greek authors most often attribute such knowledge to Hermes Trismegistos, who engraved it upon tablets or stelae of stone, which the respective adepts found at a much later date and from which they, in turn, derived their skills.⁸ Although we do not know why the *Book*

James C. VanderKam, "The Origins and Purposes of the *Book of Jubilees*," in *Studies in the Book of Jubilees* (ed. Matthias Albani, Jörg Frey, and Armin Lange; TSAJ 65; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997) 3–24, at 19–20. John C. Reeves adduces convincing reasons for dating the book to an earlier period, that is, between 225 and 175 B.C.E. (*Jewish Lore in Manichean Cosmogony: Studies in the Book of Giants Traditions* [HUCM 14; Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1992] 54). For the purpose of the present article it suffices to say that *Jubilees* can be safely dated to the first half of the 2nd c. B.C.E.

⁷ See VanderKam, "Origins and Purposes," 20–22.

⁸ See Wolfgang Speyer, *Bücherfunde in der Glaubenswerbung der Antike. Mit einem Ausblick auf Mittelalter und Neuzeit* (Hypomnemata 24; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970) 111–20. According to Proclus, *In Tim.* 1.24 A/B, already Krantor, who lived around 250 B.C.E., maintained that Plato derived the myth of Atlantis from Egyptian stelae; see *ibid.*, 115. As Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 1.9.26 shows, Philo of Byblos, too, knew the motif and related that Sanchuniathon found stelae with the teachings of Hermes in a temple of Amun; see Speyer, *Bücherfunde*, 114–15. According to Ps.-Democritus, an alchemical author of Late Antiquity, the Greek philosopher Democritus found a stone with an inscription of Ostanos concerning alchemical knowledge; see *ibid.*, 26–27. Speyer holds that this motif—of ancient knowledge inscribed on stone tablets which later generations rediscover—ultimately goes back to Egypt; see *ibid.*, 19, 78, 111–20. If so, knowledge of the motif could have easily reached Judaea, which the Ptolemies ruled until 200 B.C.E. We may no longer accept Bousset's contention of the motif's "Chaldaean" (in the sense of Babylonian) origin, which he bases upon a single parallel in Berossos (Wilhelm Bousset, "Die Beziehungen der ältesten jüdischen Sibylle zur chaldäischen Sibylle und einige weitere Beobachtungen über den synkretistischen Charakter der spätjüdischen Litteratur," *ZNW* 3 [1902] 23–49, at 43–46; *idem* and Hugo Gressmann, *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter* [HNT 21; 4th ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1966] 492–93).

of *Jubilees* ascribes such knowledge to Kainan, who appears only in the Septuagint text of Gen 11:12,⁹ here Kainan obviously takes the role of the adept in Hermetic writings, albeit in a negative form.¹⁰

In contrast to this Josephus gives the motif a much more positive turn. In *Jewish Antiquities* 1.69–71 he writes about the descendants of Seth:¹¹

^{1.69}All of these, being virtuous, lived in happiness in the same land without civil strife, with nothing unpleasant coming upon them until their death. And they discovered the science with regard to the heavenly bodies and their orderly arrangement. ⁷⁰And in order that humanity might not lose their discoveries or perish before they came to be known, Adamos having predicted that there would be an extermination of the universe, at one time by a violent

⁹ See Jacques T. A. G. M. van Ruiten, *Primaeval History Interpreted: The Rewriting of Genesis 1–2 in the Book of Jubilees* (Supplements to JSJ 66; Leiden: Brill, 2000) 313, 315. The Masoretic text reads Selach, to which George Kedrenos, *Compendium historiarum*, also attests; see Speyer, *Bücherfunde*, 114, n. 23. George probably depends here upon Julius Africanus, who is attributing the Kainan-episode to Selach; see Bousset, “Beziehungen,” 44.

¹⁰ In the—admittedly much later—Samaritan book *Asatir* 4.15 Kainan’s father Arpachshad receives a “book of signs” which apparently contains astrological knowledge; see Albertus F. J. Klijn, *Seth in Jewish, Christian and Gnostic Literature* (NovTSup 46; Leiden: Brill 1977) 30, n. 15. Since the *Asatir* (whose title derives from the Arabic plural *asātīr* “stories; legends”) in its present form goes back to the 9th–12th centuries C.E. (see Hans G. Kippenberg, *Garizim und Synagoge. Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur Religion der aramäischen Periode* [Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 30; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1971] 10–11), this account most likely reflects the story in *Jubilees*. Likewise, the note in Josephus’s *Jewish Antiquities* 1.144 that Arpachshad is the ancestor of the Chaldaean (see Bousset, “Beziehungen,” 44) in all likelihood also goes back to such a tradition, since “Chaldaean” in antiquity is almost synonymous with “astrologer.” Klaus Berger interprets *Jubilees* 8.1–4 as referring to faulty methods of calculating the calendar, but the text does not clearly indicate this (*Das Buch der Jubiläen* [ed. and trans. Klaus Berger; JSHRZ 2.3; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1981] 369 n. 3e). However, the discrediting of astrology in *Jubilees* ch. 8.1–4 may relate to the partition of the earth which follows soon after the Kainan-episode in *Jubilees* ch. 8.8–9.15, especially given that the division of the earth into κλίματα by Greek geographers involved astronomical knowledge (see below, n. 28). According to ch. 8.9, Noah’s children at first divided the earth “in a bad way among themselves” (VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, 51). Only after this, in 8.11, does Noah himself divide the earth by casting lots. This presupposes two ways of dividing the parts of the earth among Noah’s descendants, one of which is evil and, as the annunciation of divine judgement in ch. 9.15 shows, presumably leads to “wickedness, impurity, fornication and sin” (ibid., 58)—evils that other parts of *Jubilees* associates with the fallen Watchers. Since the geographical section in *Jubilees* chs. 8–10 seems to aim toward the refutation of “the claim that the Jews stole their land from the Canaanites, the supposedly rightful owners” (VanderKam, “Origins and Purposes,” 22 n. 83), we may surmise that the author of *Jubilees*, by attributing the origin of astrology to the fallen angels, wishes to subvert the astronomical foundation of Hellenistic geography. In its place he introduces a division of the earth according to the casting of lots by Noah, which validates the right of the Jewish nation to its ancestral land. In the *Ethiopic Book of Enoch* ch. 8.3 some of the fallen angels teach astrology to humankind, which explains why *Jubilees* attributes the invention of astrology to the Watchers; see van Ruiten, *Primaeval History*, 318.

¹¹ I take this translation from Louis H. Feldman, trans. *Judean Antiquities 1–4*. (vol. 3 of *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary*; ed. Steve Mason; Leiden: Brill, 2000) 24–26.

fire and at another time by a force with an abundance of water, they made two pillars, one of brick and the other of stones and inscribed their findings on both,⁷¹ in order that if the one of brick should be lost owing to the flood the one of stone should remain and offer an opportunity to teach men what had been written on it and to reveal that also one of brick had been set up by them. And it remains until today in the land of Seiris.

This account shows a marked difference from *Jubilees* 8.1–4. First of all, it attributes the discovery of astronomy¹² not to the fallen angels but to the descendants of Seth who excel in virtue and whom Josephus pictures in accordance with pagan authors' descriptions of the Golden Age.¹³ Furthermore, *Jubilees* credits them with having predicted two cosmic catastrophes, a flood and a conflagration.¹⁴ This detail of Josephus' story has a precise astrological background, which his pagan audience must have known. From an early time on Greek cosmology knew of a *magnus annus* which was completed when the planets reached exactly the same position they had in the beginning of the world. In the course of this macroperiod so-called "great conjunctions" of the planets in the individual signs of the Zodiac would take place and lead to cosmic catastrophes.¹⁵ Seneca, in *Nat.* 3.29.1 and *Marc.* 26.6, refers to a theory derived from Berossos, according to which such catastrophes, a flood

¹² As Per Beskow remarks, the distinction between astronomy and astrology does not operate in antiquity ("Astrologie I. Einleitung," *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* [ed. Gerhard Krause and Gerhard Müller; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1979] 4:277).

¹³ See Louis H. Feldman, *Studies in Josephus' Rewritten Bible* (JSJ Supplements 58; Leiden: Brill, 1998) 3–8. We do not know why Josephus attributes the invention of astronomy to the Sethites. Later rabbinic authorities as well as Christian exegetes and historiographers interpret the "sons of God" in Gen 6:2 as descendants of Seth; see Philip S. Alexander, "The Targumim and Early Exegesis of 'Sons of God' in Genesis 6," *JJS* 23 (1972) 60–71, at 62–63; Lionel R. Wickham, "The Sons of God and Daughters of Men: Genesis VI 2 in Early Christian Exegesis," *OtSt* 19 (1974) 135–147, at 141–44; Gedaliahu A. G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology* (NHS 24; Leiden: Brill, 1984) 25–26. Since the fall of the Watchers in *Jubilees* likewise refers to Gen 6:2, it would *prima facie* seem probable that Josephus credits the descendants of Seth with astronomical knowledge on the basis of their identification with the Watchers. However, Josephus's paraphrase of Gen 6:2 in *Ant.* 1.73 does not indicate that he knew of such an interpretation of the fallen angels; see Feldman, *Judean Antiquities*, 26 n. 172. Moreover, Josephus's knowledge of actual astrological books ascribed to Seth most probably lies immediately behind his account in *Antiquities*. Later on, Byzantine historiographers in particular depict Seth as an astrologer; see Klijn, *Seth*, 48–53.

¹⁴ To be sure, Adam is the one who makes this prediction. Such accords with later rabbinic sources, which ascribe to Adam a general prophetic foreknowledge as well as skills in calendrical calculation, which he transmitted to Enoch and Noah; see Salomo Rappaport, *Agada und Exegese bei Flavius Josephus* (Veröffentlichungen der Oberrabbiner Dr. H. P. Chajes-Preisstiftung an der israelitisch-theologischen Lehranstalt in Wien 3; Vienna: Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation, 1930) 7 and nn. 44–45; Feldman, *Judean Antiquities*, 24 nn. 164–65. Adam's prediction, however, by virtue of having an astrological background, does relate to the Sethites' discovery of astronomy; the Sethites themselves, of course, inscribe the prophecy on stelae.

¹⁵ See Wilhelm Gundel and Hans G. Gundel, "Planeten," in *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft* (ed. Konrat Ziegler; Stuttgart: Metzler, 1950) 20: cols. 2095–2096, 2148–2151.

and conflagration, will take place when *sidera sideribus incurrent* (Marc. 26.6).¹⁶ Seneca shares with *Jubilees* 8.1–4 the inscription of this knowledge on stelae.¹⁷ However, in this connection Josephus mentions a geographical detail that *Jubilees* lacks: The stelae remain “until today in the land of Seiris (κατὰ τὴν γῆν Σερίδα).” This has a parallel in the fragment of Ps.-Manetho that Syncellus preserves, which states that Thoth erected stelae with oracular knowledge ἐν τῇ Σηριαδικῇ γῇ. After the flood Agathodaemon found and translated them and deposited them in Egyptian temples.¹⁸ Even though we cannot determine the location of these places with certainty, we may reasonably assume that both designations refer to the country of the *Seres*, that is, the Chinese, whom ancient authors thought an exceptionally peaceful and just people.¹⁹

Summing up, we may say that both Josephus and the *Book of Jubilees* attribute astronomical/astrological knowledge to persons of remote antiquity. In both cases

¹⁶ “Stars clash with stars”; see *ibid.*, col. 2150. The Hellenistic Babylonian author Berossos (first half of the 3d c. B.C.E.), to whom Seneca here refers, obviously thought that a flood would take place when the planets met in the constellation of Aquarius, a watery sign, whereas a conflagration would occur upon their conjunction in the fiery sign Cancer. Since Cancer dominates at the world’s beginning, conflagration also marks the end of the world; see *ibid.* Feldman (*Studies*, 15) notes the motif’s use in Stoicism but does not point out its astrological background. Besides, rabbinic authors also know a *אש של אש* but relate this event to the punishment of Sodom; see Rappaport, *Agada*, 90–92, and Feldman, *Judean Antiquities*, 24 n. 166. As Ginzberg convincingly argued, this most likely compensates for the denial of individual retribution, which the ending of the world through a cosmic conflagration implies; see *ibid.*, 90–91. The rabbinic rejection of this notion accords well with Gero’s interpretation of the legends about Noah’s castration as polemics against astrological tenets; see above, n. 2. On the other hand, Josephus likely did not think the flood and conflagration would occur at the same time. If he did (as Rappaport [*Agada*, 91–93] supposes) the erection of two stelae as a precaution against the loss of the Sethites’ knowledge would have served no purpose, since both would perish in the double catastrophe. As to the motif’s origin, it is “Chaldaean” (see Bousset, “Beziehungen,” 45 n. 5) insofar as we consider its astrological background. Cuneiform texts, however, as Bousset himself elsewhere notes (Bousset and Gressmann, *Religion*, 492–93) offer not a single parallel, wherefore the notion cannot be Babylonian. According to Gundel and Gundel (“Planeten,” cols. 2148–2149) the motif ultimately goes back to Hermetic and Egyptian sources.

¹⁷ See above, n. 8.

¹⁸ See Gerrit J. Reinink, “Das Land ‘Seiris’ (Šir) und das Volk der Serer in jüdischen und christlichen Traditionen,” *JSJ* 6 (1975) 72–85, at 73.

¹⁹ See *ibid.*, 72–85, esp. 80. Feldman (*Judean Antiquities*, 26 n. 168) relates Reinink’s conclusions too briefly and misrepresents his argumentation. Reinink does not suggest that “the term Seiris is based on the old Chinese word for silk” (*ibid.*) but connects the name with Greek σῆρ “silkworm” and related terms, which themselves undoubtedly do have that origin; see Reinink, “Seiris,” 78. Reitzenstein’s contention that Seiris is identical with Σερίδα γῆ, which denotes the country of Isis and which we therefore take to refer to Egypt (see *ibid.*, 74), does not seem probable in the light of Reinink’s findings. In the *Hypostasis of the Archons* a mountain of Sir (ΠΤΟΟΥ ΝCIP) appears as the landing place of Noah’s ark, and ch. 134 of the *Pistis Sophia* maintains that Jesus dictated books with oracular knowledge to Enoch in Paradise, which Enoch later deposited on the “rock Ararat” (see *ibid.*, 74, and Speyer, *Bücherfunde*, 30). Moreover, according to Hippolytus’s *refutatio* 9.13.1–3, the 2nd c. Judaeo-Christian prophet Elchasai (probably a legendary figure) received his holy book from *Seres* in Parthia. This latter information accords with the fact that the silk-trade

inscriptions preserve this knowledge and both times there is a connection with Noah. In *Jubilees* one of Noah's descendants finds the inscription during his lifetime; according to *Jewish Antiquities*, the inscription's content pertains to the flood. Unlike the *Book of Jubilees*, however, Josephus has a positive image of oracular knowledge and, furthermore, locates the inscription in a far-eastern country where, he contends, one could see it even in his own day.²⁰

Having outlined the setting of these stories in their Hellenistic environment, I will now relate them to the account found in *Cave of Treasures*. In its present form, to be sure, this account presents a Christian reworking of the theme, which serves the purpose of explaining how the Magi were able to predict the birth of Christ and actually come to Bethlehem to do him homage. Ch. 45.11 of the *Cave of Treasures* states that they read the "oracle of Nimrod", and ch. 27.6–11 explains the origin of this oracle by describing a meeting between Nimrod and Yōnṭōn, a "son of Noah":²¹

^{27.6}And Nimrod went up to *yqrwra*, that is, Nod. ⁷And when he reached the lake *ʾwkr̥s*, he found Yōnṭōn, the son of Noah. ⁸And he went down and bathed in the lake; then he drew near and prostrated himself before Yōnṭōn, son of Noah. ⁹And Yōnṭōn said to him: You who are a king are prostrating yourself before me? ¹⁰And Nimrod said to him: Because of you I went down here. ¹¹And he stayed with him for three years and Yōnṭōn [taught] Nimrod wisdom and revelatory books; and he [Yōnṭōn] said: Do not return to me.

Like the texts quoted above, this passage deals with the transmission of oracular knowledge deriving from a person of the remote past. The sentences that follow (ch. 27.12–22) show that this knowledge concerns stellar oracles: Nimrod returns to his country and starts using the divinatory methods taught to him by Yōnṭōn. A fire-priest observes him and subsequently asks the demon residing within the fire to reveal the same art to him. The demon advises him to marry his mother, sister and daughter,²² whereupon the priest starts practicing astrology and "Chaldaean

between China and the Mediterranean operated through the intermediary of Parthia (see Reinink, "Seiris," 79 and n. 38). In the later Syriac chronicle of Ps.-Dionysius (compiled in the 8th c.) the country appears under the name of ܣܝܪ [šīr], which Bardaisan's *Book of the Laws of Countries* uses to denote China. In the chronicle, the Magi, who possess an oracular book by Seth predicting the birth of Christ, dwell there (see *ibid.*, 74–75). This account already represents the Christian version of the story which we will treat below in connection with Yōnṭōn.

²⁰ A version of this story, very similar to the one in Josephus, appears in the *Vita Adae et Evae* ch. 49.3–50.1; see Feldman, *Judean Antiquities*, 24 n. 166. It most likely depends either on *Jewish Antiquities* or on a common source but differs from Josephus insofar as the inscription does not deal with astrology but concerns the life of Adam and Eve; see *ibid.*, and Rappaport, *Agada*, 7–8.

²¹ I offer this translation based upon the Eastern recension of the Syriac text as given in *La Caverne des Trésors. Les deux recensions syriaques* (ed. Su-Min Ri; CSCO 486; *Scriptores Syri* 207; Louvain: Peeters 1987) 210.

²² Christian polemics constantly targeted marriages between close relatives, which the Zoroastrian nobility and clergy apparently practiced; see Eznik of Kolb, *De Deo* § 187 (in *A Treatise on God written in Armenian by Eznik of Kolb (floruit c. 430–c. 450)* [trans. Monica J. Blanchard and

arts.” The author of the *Cave of Treasures* takes pains, however, to emphasize that superstitious practices do not contaminate Nimrod’s own divination, because it was Yōnṭōn who taught it to him; the Persians called it “oracle,” and the Romans called it “astronomy” (27.20).

Since Nimrod in this account appears in close contact with fire-worship (though he does not invent it) and, further, since *Ps.-Clementine Homilies* 8.4.1 identifies him with Zoroaster, it seems valid to assume that in *Cave of Treasures* the name Nimrod in fact stands for Zoroaster, to whom Hellenistic astrology attributed a *corpus* of divinatory and magical texts.²³ However, the alleged son of Noah, Yōnṭōn, who safeguards oracular wisdom in the same way as the Watchers in *Book of Jubilees* 8.1–4 and the descendants of Seth in *Jewish Antiquities* 1.69–71, appears neither in the Bible nor in any source antedating the *Book of the Cave of Treasures*.²⁴

Ri, in commenting on *Cave* 27.6–11, derived a first hint of Yōnṭōn’s identity from his dwelling place in a country named Nod. Both Gen 4:16 and *Cave* 5.31 mention this location as the place where Kain fled after murdering his brother, and the Masoretic text locates it קדמה-ערן. The rabbinical law of exegesis by analogy apparently identified this place with the “Eastern mountains” (הר הקדם), which Gen 10:30 mentions as the dwelling-place of the descendants of Yoqṭān, grandson of Arpachshad.²⁵ Drawing upon the similar appearance of the names Yoqṭān and Yōnṭōn in Estrangela-script (ܝܘܩܬܐܢ and ܝܘܢܬܐܢ), Ri contends that these two names designate the selfsame person.²⁶ To corroborate this, we may observe that in Num

Robin D. Young; Early Christian Texts in Translation 2; Louvain: Peeters, 1998] 117–18) and the Nestorian canons quoted in Victor Aptowitzer, *Kain und Abel in der Agada, den Apokryphen, der hellenistischen, christlichen und muhammedanischen Literatur* (Veröffentlichungen der Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation 1; Vienna: Löwit, 1922) 8–9.

²³ On Zoroaster in astrology, see Wilhelm Gundel and Hans G. Gundel, *Astrologumena* (Sudhoffs Archiv Beihefte 6; Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1966) 61–65. The traditions attributed to Ps.-Zoroaster obviously go back to Hellenistic Egypt (see *ibid.*, 61–62) which accords well with the Egyptian background of the inscription/stelae in *Book of Jubilees* and Josephus; see above, n. 7. The teacher-student motif present in *Cave of Treasures* occurs in Hippolytus’s *Elench.* (1.2.12) where, however, Zoroaster appears as teacher, and Pythagoras is his student; see *ibid.*, 60 n. 2. The account in *Cave of Treasures* may be trying to subvert such a notion by stating that Zoroaster himself learned his wisdom from a son of Noah. The use of ܥܕܐ [s’gad] “to prostrate oneself; to bow down; to worship” in *Cave* 24.8 indicates the wish to make Nimrod/Zoroaster inferior to Yōnṭōn, which stands in marked contrast to Zoroaster’s exaltation by pagan astrologers.

²⁴ Later works, to be sure, mention Yōnṭōn prolifically, but all these references ultimately go back to *Cave of Treasures*; see Gero, “Legend,” 323–26.

²⁵ See Ri, *Commentaire*, 350–52. Josephus (*Antiquities* 1.147) mentions that the sons of Yoqṭān inhabit India and Σηπία, that is, China; see Ri, *Commentaire*, 352. That the author of *Cave of Treasures* regarded Nod as a far-eastern country is also shown by the fact that we may best explain the unintelligible “lake ʾwksr” (ܐܬܠܐܬܐ ܐܘܟܪܐ) in *Cave* 27.7—with reference to parallel accounts in *Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum* and the ps.-Dionysiac chronicle—as ܐܬܠܐܬܐ ܐܘܟܪܐ [puqianos yamā] “ocean”, that is, the world-surrounding sea (see *ibid.*, 324–25). *Cave* 24.20 furthermore mentions the “mountains of Nod” as located at the “ends of the East”.

²⁶ See *ibid.*, 341–57, esp. 356. Apart from misspelling, we may assume the possibility that “Yōnṭōn” represents a Babylonian pronunciation of “Yoqṭān.” Note that the name “Aquila” seems

23:7, Balaam—whom several Christian authors identify with Zoroaster—states that he came from the “Eastern mountains” (מהררי־קדם).²⁷

In addition to this tentative connection, we may further support Ri’s assumption with a specific Hellenistic and Late Antique link between astronomy and geography which will help to actually identify the elusive fourth son of Noah in Jewish sources. Hellenistic geographers divided the earth into κλίματα or ζώναι, that is, parallel circular belts between the poles and the equator. These κλίματα ultimately derived from a similar belt-like division of the sky and their exact determination on earth required astronomical skills.²⁸ Now, Gen 10:25 states that during the lifetime of Yoqtān “the earth was divided” and Targum *Ps.-Jonathan* to Gen 10:26 says that Yoqtān “begot Elmodad, who measured the earth with cords.”²⁹ This dividing and measuring procedure in itself does not imply any astronomical techniques; in fact, according to the *Book of Jubilees* 8.11, Noah divides the earth among his children by casting lots. However, in the previous sentence (8.9), Noah’s *children*, which would include Arpachshad, Yoqtān, and Elmodad, at first divided the earth “in a bad way among themselves.”³⁰ This might well refer to a division of the earth into κλίματα, as in fact a Hellenistic reader of Gen 10:25 and Targum *Ps.-Jonathan* to Gen 10:26 would naturally assume astronomical knowledge on part of the persons involved in dividing the earth. Given the fact that the division took place in the days of Yoqtān, it would furthermore have made sense to attribute this knowledge to Yoqtān, whose descendants were known to live in an Eastern land, the traditional habitat of astrologers, thus turning Yoqtān into an astronomer/astrologer who could

to appear as “Onkelos” in Babylonian sources, as two passages in the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmud attest (*yMeg* 1.9 and *bMeg* fol. 3a), where Palestinian עקילס is rendered as אונקלוס in the Babylonian version. Other examples show insertion of the letter *nun*; note the forms “Andrianus” and “Indropicus” for “Hadrian” and “Hydropicus” in the Babylonian Talmud (see Alec E. Silverstone, *Aquila and Onkelos* [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1931] 31 and n. 5; *The Targum Onkelos to Genesis* [trans. Bernard Grossfeld; The Aramaic Bible 6; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988] 5 and n. 7). “Yōntōn” may also be the “phonetic” representation of a Babylonian regional form “Yōnqtōn;” in this case the whole episode in *Cave* 27.6–11 most likely derives from an oral source.

²⁷ See *ibid.*, 354–56. In place of the term אֶרֶץ, which in the Masoretic text parallels the “Eastern mountains,” the Septuagint version of Num 23:7 has Mesopotamia. Mesopotamia, of course, is the home-country of the Chaldaeans, that is, astrologers. Hellenistic authors say that Zoroaster himself was a king of Bactria (see *ibid.*, 329); *Cave* 24.20 mentions Bactria alongside the “mountains of Nod” as an eastern country.

²⁸ See Wolfgang Hübner, “Geographie und astrologischer Zonen-Begriff in der Antike,” *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte* 24 (2001) 16–23, and *idem*, “Zone,” in *Der Neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike* 12.2 (ed. Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider; Stuttgart: Metzler, 2003) 12.2, cols. 832–34.

²⁹ *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis* (trans. Michael Maher; The Aramaic Bible: The Targums 1B; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992) 49. Gen 10:25 first of all connects the division of the earth with Yoqtān’s brother Peleg on account of a play on words with the root פלג *Pi’el* “to divide; to separate.” The Targum passage relies on a derivation of the name “Elmodad” from מדר *Qal* “to measure.”

³⁰ VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, 51; see above, n. 9.

easily have taken the role of the instructor of a key figure of Hellenistic astrology such as Nimrod/Zoroaster.³¹

We may also explain the rejection and elimination of this motif in rabbinic literature, which Gero surmised, along these lines. Not only did Hellenistic geography divide the earth in accordance with astronomical precepts, but it also assigned to the various zones of the earth (most often seven in number) a planet that ruled over and influenced each particular area and the peoples living there.³² More precisely, this would entail the notion that the stars, too—regarded in antiquity as semidivine beings—determined the fate of Israel to some extent. As the discussion in the Babylonian Talmud makes evident (*Šabb.* 156a-b), some rabbinic authorities held such a view, but by selecting proof-texts *against* this idea the redactors of the tractate make their own standpoint unmistakably clear.³³ Rav, founder of the academy in Sura and one of the outstanding scholars of the third century, also rejected the notion of astrological influence over Israel; in the rabbinical texts, Rav holds the opinion that Ham “mutilated” Noah, that is, castrated him, thus rendering him unable to even beget this son. Gero takes this as a polemical reference to a fourth son of Noah endowed with astrological knowledge.³⁴

If we accept the derivation of the name “Yōnṭōn” from “Yoṣṭān,” however, we still must ask how a fifth generation-descendant of Noah came to be seen as Noah’s son. First of all, Jewish tradition knows other tradents of astrological and oracular

³¹ A connection between Yoṣṭān and Nimrod, albeit a polemical one, appears in ch. 6 of Ps.-Philo’s *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*. Here Yoṣṭān, together with Nimrod, collaborated in throwing Abraham into the fiery furnace; see Ri, *Commentaire*, 353. Given that rabbinic literature, which aimed at refuting astrology, frequently mentions Nimrod’s hostility towards Abraham (see Gero, “Legend,” 32–30 and n. 52), Ps.-Philo likely regarded Yoṣṭān as an astrologer alongside Nimrod. In *Book of Jubilees* 8.7 Yoṣṭān does not appear by name, but his father Eber married a daughter of Nimrod by name of Azurad, which would make Yoṣṭān a grandson of Nimrod; see Ri, *Commentaire*, 353. Furthermore, Yoṣṭān and Seth are curiously similar. According to *Jubilees* 4.4, the name of Seth’s wife is Azura, and in the *Revelations* of Ps.-Methodius, whose author apparently had access to a more complete version of *Cave of Treasures*, Yōnṭōn—like Seth in Gen 5:3—was “a man in his [Noah’s] likeness, like his image” (Gero, “Legend,” 325). Since already Josephus in his *Jewish War* 6.289 mentions astrological texts under the name of Seth (see Gundel and Gundel, *Astrologumena*, 191), this parallel may likewise indicate an astrological significance for Yoṣṭān/Yōnṭōn. Furthermore, we may possibly restore the unintelligible place-name *yqrwra* in *Cave* 27.6 to Yaqdīra (see Ri, *Commentaire*, 320), which can be connected to the name “Yoṣṭān.” Bousset’s and Götze’s identifications of Yōnṭōn with the Mesopotamian fish-monster Oannes or the Iranian epical hero Ferōdīn seem far-fetched and do not have any textual basis; see Gero, “Legend,” 328 n. 47.

³² See Gundel and Gundel, “Planeten,” cols. 2140–2143.

³³ See James H. Charlesworth, “Jewish Astrology in the Talmud, Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Early Palestinian Synagogues,” *HTR* 70 (1977) 183–200, at 187. The Biblical text here adduced to denigrate astrology is Jer 10:2. I have argued elsewhere that Qumran fragments 4Q552–553—and, perhaps, Dan 10:13, 20, 21—accept the connection between planets and peoples with regard to the pagan nations (Alexander Toepel, “Planetary Demons in Early Jewish Literature,” *JSP* 14 (2005) 232–34, 237–38).

³⁴ See Gero, “Legend,” 327–30.

lore who are directly related to Noah. These include, on the one hand, Noah's son Shem, to whom tradition attributes a treatise on astrology, and on the other hand a Sybil by the name of Sambethe whom tradition calls a daughter of Noah. Moreover, *Genesis Apocryphon* §7 appears to attribute astrological knowledge to Noah himself.³⁵ All this accords with the fact that the above mentioned traditions sometimes connect the stelae containing astrological knowledge with Mount Ararat, the landing-place of Noah's ark.³⁶ Furthermore, in Berossos' account of the flood, the hero Xisuthros, who stands in parallel to the biblical Noah, hides oracular literature underground before the flood, which his descendants dig up afterward.³⁷ By the third century, therefore, Yoqṭān, whose designation "son of Noah" we may interpret in the general sense of "descendant" in a manner congruent with Biblical mode of speech, may have already become detached from his biblical place and become one of Noah's direct offspring in analogy to Shem and the Sybil Sambethe.

From the preceding discussion we clearly see that Yōnṭōn's appearance in *Cave of Treasures* 27.6–11 is by no means merely a Christian legend; rather, Gero's direction of explanation has proven fruitful and, in fact, revealed a likely Jewish counterpart of Yōnṭōn, credited with measuring the earth by astronomical methods, which would have made him one of the early practitioners of astronomy and astrology, alongside heros of Hellenistic astrology such as Nimrod/Zoroaster. The identification of Yoqṭān as an astronomer furthermore shows the ambiguous attitude towards Hellenistic science that seems to have prevailed before the formation of rabbinical Judaism. On the one hand, as we have seen, the *Book of Jubilees* (2nd c. B.C.E.) already condemns astrology and perhaps sought to discredit alleged tradents of astrological lore. On the other hand, Hellenistic Jewish writers like Artapanus and Ps.-Eupolemus unequivocally accept astrology by attributing its invention to Abraham.³⁸ The endowment of Yoqṭān with astrological skills fits with this latter attitude; its aim, however, "is not so much an advocacy of astrology as it is an attempt to say that all the things that the Greeks revere were earlier invented by, or at least known to Jews."³⁹

³⁵ See Charlesworth, "Jewish Astrology," 190–91; Bousset, "Beziehungen," 24–25); *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (trans. Geza Vermes; 4th ed.; London: Penguin Books, 1995) 450.

³⁶ See above, n. 8.

³⁷ See Bousset, "Beziehungen," 43.

³⁸ Fragments preserved by Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9.17–18; see Charlesworth, "Astrology," 189–90.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 190.

Essene Sectarianism and Social Differentiation in Judaea After 70 C.E.*

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In honorem Louis H. Feldman

■ The Essene Enigma

What happened to the Essenes after the first Jewish revolt? The answer to this seemingly simple question has proven elusive. Prior to the war, the Essenes stood alongside the Pharisees and Sadducees as one of the most prominent social factions in Judaea. Josephus and Philo allege that they numbered in the thousands and that they could be found in cities and towns throughout the country.¹

* I would like to express my gratitude to John Collins, Steven Fraade, and Dale Martin for their helpful advice in editing an earlier version of this paper that was considerably more unwieldy than the present one. Variations of this paper were read at the Social History of Formative Christianity and Judaism session of the annual meeting of the SBL, Philadelphia, Penn., 21 November 2005, and at a graduate student conference at Brown University, 9 April 2006. I benefited greatly from the conversations that followed each of those presentations. I humbly offer this paper in tribute to Professor Louis H. Feldman in honor of his 50th year of teaching, without whose influence and continued support it would not have been written.

¹ Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* [Ant.] 18.20, and Philo, *Quod omnis probus liber sit* [Prob.] 75, both number the Essene population at more than four thousand. It is probable that Josephus here relies on Philo, or that both of their accounts stem from a common source; see Morton Smith, "The Description of the Essenes in Josephus and the Philosophumena," *Hebrew Union College Annual* [HUCA] 29 (1958) 273–313. Although the accuracy of this figure is doubtful, Josephus enhances its innate value by estimating elsewhere that the Pharisees numbered more than six thousand (Ant. 17.41). Since this latter figure appears to be of his own invention, the numbers suggest that Josephus reckoned the Essenes to have been at least two-thirds as populous as the Pharisees. Berndt Schaller, "4000 Essener–6000 Phariseer: Zum Hintergrund und antiker Zahlenangaben," in *Antikes Judentum und frühes Christentum. Festschrift für Hartmut Stegemann zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Bernd Kollmann et al.; Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft [BZNW] 97; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999) 172–82, considers them to be typological figures with no evident historical value. Nevertheless, he suggests that the figures might represent a relative population ratio of Pharisees to Essenes (ibid., 182). See also Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.* (Princeton,

The Essenes were famous enough to have attracted the attention and admiration of local Judaeans and foreigners alike.² Yet after 70 C.E., the Essenes completely disappear from the historical record.³ Whereas references to the Pharisees and the Sadducees abound in early rabbinic and Christian literature, memory of the Essenes seems to have dissipated rather quickly.

N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001) 93–94. While acknowledging that Josephus's numbers are unreliable, Schwartz concludes that the sects would have constituted a rather high percentage of the adult male population of Judaea, suggesting that "almost no Judaeans (of whatever social class) can have avoided contact, indeed even family relationship, with a sectarian, and that no Judaeans apart from the smallest can have lacked a sectarian population" (ibid., 94).

On the demographic diffusion of the Essenes, see esp. Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum* [B.J.] 2.124: μία δ' οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτῶν πόλις, ἀλλ' ἐν ἐκάστη μετοικοῦσιν πολλοί ("not in a single city, but in large numbers in every town"), and see further idem, *Ant.* 13.311–312, 15.373–378; B.J. 2.124–127. Philo's testimony on this matter is inconsistent: at one point he reports that the Essenes lived in villages and specifically avoided cities (*Prob.* 76), yet he reports elsewhere that they lived in many cities and villages in Judaea (*Hypothetica* [*Hypoth.*] 11.1; cf. idem, *Prob.* 85). The occurrence of multiple Essene communities likely informs the references in the Damascus Document [CD] to those sectarians who lived in "camps" governed by sectarian law (see e.g., CD 7.6, 12.22–23, 13.5, 13.16, 13.20, 14.3, 14.9, 14.7, 19.2, 20.26) and those who lived in "towns" (CD 10.21; 12.19). On the social location of the townie sectarians, see the comments of Joseph M. Baumgarten in idem and Daniel R. Schwartz, "Damascus Document" in *Damascus Document, War Scroll, and Related Documents* (vol. 2 of *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek Texts with English Translations*; ed. James H. Charlesworth et al.; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1995) 53 n. 190, who locates them as in regular towns among the broader Jewish populace rather than in exclusive sectarian towns.

² On attraction to Essenism among other Jews, see Josephus, B.J. 2.120; Philo, *Hypoth.* 11.2–3; Pliny, *Naturalis historia* [N.H.] 5.73. The renown of the Essenes is especially notable in reference to the account of Philo, for he doesn't appear to have been aware of the Pharisees or the Sadducees. For his part, Pliny seems to have been so impressed with the Essenes that he failed to notice that they were Jews, a nation for whom he otherwise had little affection; see Robert A. Kraft, "Pliny in Essenes, Pliny on Jews," *Dead Sea Discoveries* [DSD] 8 (2001) 255–61. For further indication that the Essenes enjoyed a reputation outside of Jewish circles, see Steve Mason, "What Josephus Says about the Essenes in His Judaeans War," in *Text and Artifact in the Religions of Mediterranean Antiquity: Essays in Honour of Peter Richardson* (ed. Stephen G. Wilson and Michel Desjardins; Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000) 423–455, at 426–28, who has pointed out that Josephus distinguishes between a Greek-language version of the sect's name, Ἐσσηνοί, and Semitic-language version of the name, Ἐσσαιῶν, in common use amongst Jews (*Ant.* 15.371–372). As Mason keenly notes (ibid., 427), Philo, a Jew, likewise refers to the sect as Ἐσσαιῶν (*Prob.* 75; *Hypoth.* 11.1, 11.14), while Pliny the Elder (N.H. 5.73) and Dio Chrysostom (ap. Synesius of Cyrene, *Dio* 3.2), both Gentiles, employ the terms *Esseni* and Ἐσσηνοί, respectively.

³ Pliny, N.H. 5.73, intimates that an Essene community was active in the northern Dead Sea region after Jerusalem had already been destroyed (*Hierosolymis* [. . .] *nunc alterum bustum*). Although composed after 70 C.E., Pliny's confused account (he also mistakes Jericho for Jerusalem) is likely attributable to his reuse of materials predating the revolt; for discussion of possible sources for Pliny's information, see Stephen Goranson, "Posidonius, Strabo and Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa as Sources on Essenes," *Journal of Jewish Studies* [JJS] 45 (1994) 295–98. Although they do not attest to the fate of the Essenes, a few references in early Christian literature allege the survival of certain Jewish sects past 70 C.E.; see Justin, *Dialogue* [*Dial.*] 80.4–5 (ca. mid-second century); Epiphanius, *Panarion* [*Pan.*] 20.3.1–2 (ca. mid-fourth century). Although these vague references are of little substantive historiographical value, Martin Goodman, "Sadducees and Essenes after

Prior attempts to account for the enigmatic disappearance of the Essenes have failed to yield any plausible solutions. In the early days of critical biblical scholarship, one common mode of inquiry traced the trajectory of Essene sectarianism to the Ebionites, ascetic Christians who claimed Jewish origins and who first appeared on the historical record in the mid-second century C.E. The grounds for this identification, however, were never more than conjectural.⁴ Since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the general identification of the Qumran community as an Essene group, speculation regarding the fate of the sect has run rampant. Those who insist that the Qumran community represented the sect's primary site of occupation assume that most of the Essenes died or dispersed when their complex was razed by the Romans in the year 68 C.E.⁵ But while Josephus reports that

70 CE," in *Crossing the Boundaries: Essays in Biblical Interpretation in Honor of Michael D. Goulder* (ed. Stanley E. Porter et al.; Biblical Interpretation Series 8; Leiden: Brill, 1994) 347–55, at 347–48, suggests that they may be construed as positive evidence for the continued existence of Jewish sects after 70 C.E. Epiphanius also suggests that the Essenes survived the war only to evolve into an otherwise unknown Christian sect known as the 'Iesaeans' (*Pan.* 29.1.3–4, 29.4.9–5.7). His speculation, however, hardly amounts to reliable historical testimony; for a critical discussion, see Simon C. Mimouni, "Qui sont les Jesséens dans la notice 29 du Panarion d'Epiphane de Salamine?" *Novum Testamentum [NovT]* 43 (2001) 264–99.

⁴ This theory is founded on Epiphanius's hopelessly confused claim the Ebionites were founded by a man named Ebion who himself had arisen from the within the ranks of former Essenes who had adopted Christianity (*Pan.* 30.1.3. cf. 30.2.1); see my previous note and further, Albertus F. J. Klijn and Gerrit J. Reinink, *Patristic Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects* (Novum Testamentum Supplements [NovTSup] 36; Leiden: Brill, 1973) 28–29. It was reintroduced in modern times by Ferdinand C. Baur, *De Ebionitarum origine et doctrina, ab Essenis repetenda* (Tübingen: Hopferi de l'Orme, 1831), and was developed more fully by Albrecht Ritschl, *Die Entstehung der altkatholischen Kirche. Eine kirchen- und dogmengeschichtliche Monographie* (2d ed.; Bonn: Marcus, 1857) 204–20. For further discussion of the work of these and other scholars who pursued this mode of inquiry, see Siegfried Wagner, *Die Essener in der wissenschaftlichen Diskussion, vom Ausgang des 18. bis zum Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts. Eine wissenschaftliche Studie* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft [BZAW] 79; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1960) 176–89. Critical analysis of the patristic witnesses diminishes the plausibility that the phenomenon commonly identified as Ebionism derived from a pre-Christian sectarian context; cf. the recent discussions of Richard Bauckham, "The Origin of the Ebionites," in *The Image of the Judaeo-Christians in Ancient Jewish and Christian Literature* (ed. Peter J. Tomson and Doris Lambers-Petry; Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament [WUNT] 158; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2003) 162–81, at 172–81, and Sakari Häkkinen, "Ebionites," in *A Companion to Second-Century Christian 'Heretics'* (ed. Antti Marjanen and Petri Luomanen; Vigiliae Christianae Supplements [VCSup] 76; Leiden: Brill, 2005) 247–78.

⁵ See e.g., Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (5th ed.; New York: Penguin, 1997) 66. This suggestion is common also among those who identify the Qumran settlement as one of multiple Essene settlements; see e.g., Frank M. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran*, (3d ed.; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 62. Despite the speculative nature of this claim, the archaeological record clearly indicates that the Qumran complex was besieged and partially destroyed in the year 68 C.E., which event marked the end of its settlement by the sectarians; see Jodi Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001) 61–62; Cross, *ibid.*, 62–63.

some Essenes met their fates during the war, the idea that a group so large and so geographically diffuse could have been restricted to the modest confines of Qumran is patently absurd.⁶ Many scholars have sought to trace the remnants of the Essenes by identifying parallels between the writings of the Qumran community and later religious treatises. One popular mode of argumentation based on comparative legal analysis seeks to subvert the question by reclassifying the Essenes alongside the Sadducees and locating their successors within the boundaries of the rabbinic movement.⁷ Others have suggested that the sect can be traced to early Christian

⁶ See Josephus, *B.J.* 2.152–153, where the historian describes how certain Essenes endured torture at the hands of the Romans. Josephus does not specify the location of this incident or whether the captives in question constituted a unified sectarian community, although it is possible that he is referring to the siege of Qumran of another such settlement. Archaeologists, however, have estimated the site's maximum occupational capacity at only a few hundred people, and evidence of facilities suitable for occupation in the area around Qumran does not bring the tally much higher; see Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 69–71, and further, Magen Broshi and Hanan Eshel, "Residential Caves at Qumran," *DSD* 6 (1999) 328–48, at 330–39, on the remains of extramural settlements in the vicinity of the site.

⁷ See e.g., Lawrence H. Schiffman, "The New Halakhic letter (4QMMT) and the Origins of the Dead Sea Sect," *Biblical Archaeologist* [BA] 53 (1990) 64–73; idem, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: The History of Judaism, the Background of Christianity, the Lost Library of Qumran* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1994) 87–89; Yaakov Sussmann, "The History of the Halakha and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Preliminary Talmudic Observations on *Miqsat Ma'ase Ha-Torah* (4QMMT)," Appendix 1 in *Qumran Cave 4.V: Miqsat Ma'ase Ha-Torah* [4Q394 = 4QMMT^a] (ed. Elisha Qimron and John Strugnell; Discoveries in the Judean Desert [DJD] 10; Oxford: Clarendon, 1994) 179–200; Joseph M. Baumgarten, "Sadducean Elements in Qumran Law," in *The Community of the Renewed Covenant: The Notre Dame Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. Eugene Ulrich and James C. VanderKam; Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994) 27–36. For related theories involving the location of the Essenes within rabbinic legal discourse, see Magen Broshi, "Anti-Qumranic Polemics in the Talmud," in *The Madrid Qumran Congress: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Madrid 18–21 March, 1991* (ed. Julio Treballe Barrera and Luis Vegas Montaner; 2 vols.; Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah [STDJ] 12; Leiden: Brill, 1992) 2.589–600, at 2.598–600 (reprinted in idem, *Bread, Wine, Walls and Scrolls* [Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplements [JSPSup] 36; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001] 211–22, at 221–22); Zeev Safrai, "The Memory of the Rabbis," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Fifty Years After Their Discovery: Proceedings of the Jerusalem Congress, July 20–25, 1997* (ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman et al.; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2000) 521–41. For incisive critiques of the many faulty methodological presuppositions underlying this mode of inquiry, see Yaakov Elman, "Some Remarks on 4QMMT and the Rabbinic Tradition, or: When Is a Parallel Not a Parallel?" in *Reading 4QMMT: New Perspectives on Qumran Law and History* (ed. John Kampen and Moshe J. Bernstein; SBL Symposium Series [SBLSymS] 2; Atlanta: Scholars, 1996) 99–128; Eyal Regev, "Were the Priests All the Same? Qumranic Halakhah in Comparison with Sadducean Halakhah," *DSD* 12 (2005) 158–88, at 158–85; Lutz Doering, "Parallels without 'Parallelomania': Methodological Reflections on Comparative Analysis of Halakhah in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Rabbinic Perspectives: Rabbinic Literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls, Proceedings of the Eighth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature, 7–9 January, 2003* (ed. Steven D. Fraade and Aharon Shemesh; STDJ; Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

groups who maintained characteristically Essenic beliefs and practices.⁸ None of these suggestions, however, have achieved wide acceptance. Without any substantive evidence connecting the Essenes to later forms of Judaism or Christianity, there are bound to be as many permutations of these hypotheses as there are witnesses to support them.

I would like to suggest an alternative approach to the question. The theories that have been submitted thus far share a common presumption that something happened to the Essenes to effectuate their disappearance, something that altered their social location in reference to mainstream Judaism. Some would have the Essenes simply vanish from the face of the earth, while others would have them drawn into the rabbinic movement and others still would have them drawn toward Christianity. I think it is more reasonable to presume that nothing happened to them at all. Their disappearance from the historical record belies the possibility that the sect simply became irrelevant to those who composed that record. Rather than try to identify remnants of the Essenes in random places, I submit that we should look for them exactly where they should have been, which is to say living among other Jews in Judaea. I propose that the continued occurrence of Essene sectarianism can be detected in the legal rhetoric of the ancient rabbis who negotiated the new social order that emerged in Judaea after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple. Specifically, I intend to demonstrate that Essenes—or people very much like them—can be identified in the early rabbinic discourse on social differentiation.

■ Social Differentiation in Judaea after 70 C.E.

Following the end of the war, the Jewish nation was faced with an imperative of social reorganization. The sectarian ethic that previously characterized Jewish society had directly contributed to the outbreak of the revolt. The onset of Roman rule in 63 B.C.E. had effectively diverted the common sectarian agenda toward the political arena and thus away from the basis of ideological competition whence it had arisen.⁹ By the mid-first century C.E., the accumulated effects of a depressed

⁸ See e.g., Joseph Fitzmyer, "The Qumran Scrolls, the Ebionites, and their Literature," *Theological Studies* [TS] 16 (1955) 335–72 (reprinted in idem, *Essays in the Semitic Background of the New Testament* [London: Chapman, 1971] 435–80); James H. Charlesworth, "The Origin and Subsequent History of the Authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls," *Revue de Qumran* [RevQ] 10 (1980) 213–33. For discussion of several theories implicating the Essenes and the Dead Sea Scrolls in the origins of Christian gnosticism, see Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Pre-Christian Gnosticism: A Survey of the Proposed Evidences* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker House, 1983) 151–56. An obscure theory implicating the Essenes in the composition of the apostolic church of Jerusalem likewise has no historical merit; see the critique of Richard Bauckham, "The Early Jerusalem Church, Qumran, and the Essenes," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls as Background to Postbiblical Judaism and Early Christianity: Papers from an International Conference at St. Andrews in 2001* (ed. James R. Davila; STDJ 46; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 63–89.

⁹ Anthony J. Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach* (Wilmington, Del.: Glazier, 1988) identifies the Pharisees and Sadducees of the first

economy and a provincial government largely uninterested in the welfare of its subjects had yielded a state of social tension and popular protest.¹⁰ The resulting unrest only abated in the wake of much death and destruction. When the war finally came to an end, the bitter impression left by sectarian dissent became the subject of concern to those Jews who assumed the responsibility of revitalizing their devastated nation. Shaye J. D. Cohen has described how the sages who assembled at the coastal town of Yavneh under the banner of the nascent rabbinic movement placed the elimination of sectarianism at the forefront of their agenda. Acknowledging that the sects had originally devised their respective ideological platforms in reference to the Temple administration, the rabbis construed the loss of the cult as a definitive negation of the sectarian paradigm.¹¹ In its place, the rabbis promoted an "ideology

century C.E. as "retainers" who occupied a limited sector of social actors who "served the needs of the ruler and the governing class" without ever achieving admission to the Jewish governing elite operating under the Roman authorities (*ibid.*, 41). A retainer class, according to Saldarini's formulation, is "a political interest group who wished to influence the way Jewish life was lived religiously, socially, and politically" by maintaining "a partly independent power base through their influence on the people (*ibid.*, 106)." Saldarini (*ibid.*, 286) describes the Pharisees as a reformist sect that had differentiated itself from other Jews while maintaining the hope that their actions would motivate reform within the larger society whence they derived. The motivations of the Sadducees remain obscure, although see Albert I. Baumgarten, *The Flourishing of the Jewish Sects in the Maccabean Era: An Interpretation* (Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplements [JSJSup] 55; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 11 n. 29, who notes that one can presume that they functioned as a sect somehow comparable to the Pharisees by virtue of the fact that Josephus classifies them as such. Baumgarten (*ibid.*, 13) classifies the Sadducees as a reformist sect as well, although he proceeds to warn against overconfidence in any such static characterization. As he notes (*ibid.*, 14–15), the sects were engaged in constant negotiation of power between one another, meaning that the sociological profile of a given group could evolve over time in dynamic interaction with its competitors.

¹⁰ On the disruptive effects of sectarianism and competing religious ideologies on the eve of the revolt, see Martin Goodman, *The Ruling Class of Judaea: The Origins of the Jewish Revolt against Rome, A.D. 66–70* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) 76–108. Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society*, 94–98, concurs with Goodman's conclusions but limits the political dimension of Jewish sectarianism to the first century C.E. See further Daniel R. Schwartz, *Agrippa I: The Last King of Judaea* (Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum [TSAJ] 23; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1990) 116–30, for discussion of sectarian unrest in the mid-first century C.E.

¹¹ Shaye J. D. Cohen, "The Significance of Yavneh: Pharisees, Rabbis, and the End of Jewish Sectarianism," *HUCA* 55 (1984) 27–53. See especially *ibid.*, 43–45, for discussion of the impact of the loss of the Temple cult, and further *idem*, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (Library of Early Christianity [LEC] 7; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987) 131–32. Support for Cohen's theory has been widespread; see e.g., Günter Stemberger, *Jewish Contemporaries of Jesus: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes* (trans. Allan W. Mahnke; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 140–47; Albert I. Baumgarten, *The Flourishing of the Jewish Sects*, 194–95; Lester L. Grabbe, *Judaic Religion in the Second Temple Period: Belief and Practice from the Exile to Yavneh* (London: Routledge, 2000) 120–24. Daniel Boyarin, however, has recently questioned Cohen's treatment within a comprehensive reappraisal of the designs of the Yavneh generation; see *idem*, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004) 151–201. Boyarin (*ibid.*, 155–57) suggests that the depiction of the Yavneh generation in the sources from which Cohen derives his argument largely reflects a sixth century C.E. viewpoint designed to promote the agenda of the nascent Jewish orthodoxy emerging in response to Christian domination. While I agree with Boyarin regarding

of pluralism," envisioning "a society marked by legal disputes between individual teachers who nevertheless respected each other's right to disagree."¹² Only those Jews who preferred to maintain divisive sectarian ideologies would not be tolerated within this new paradigm for normative Judaism. The rabbis branded these would-be schismatics as *minim*, or heretics, subjecting them to abusive rhetoric and urging their adherents to treat them as pariahs.¹³

Tannaitic legal texts indicate that subsequent generations of rabbis had not yet agreed upon their precise definition of normative Judaism. For instance, they continued to argue over the status of the *'am ha-'areš*, or "people of the land" (cf. Lat. *pagani*), a class of Jews who acceded to the rabbinic standards in all but a few areas of religious observance.¹⁴ Although the slight deviance of the *'am ha-*

the later rabbinic editors' consciously revisionist portrayal of the Yavneh generation, his cursory critique of Cohen's treatment is not entirely convincing. While Boyarin is correct in arguing that late rabbinic editors embellished the earlier tannaitic accounts of the Yavneh generation, he does not engage the genuine tannaitic materials that lie at the heart of Cohen's argument. See also Jacob Neusner, *Reading and Believing: Ancient Judaism and Contemporary Gullibility* (Brown Judaic Studies [BJS] 113; Atlanta: Scholars, 1986) 82–89, who denies the rhetorical context in which Cohen's situates the tannaitic passages, characteristically concluding that these texts are of no historical value for the first century C.E. Although it is possible that even the tannaitic image of the Yavneh generation was formulated in reference to rabbinic ideals of the early third century, there is no way to determine this theory with any degree of certainty.

¹² Cohen, "The Significance of Yavneh," 45. Cohen contrasts this attitude with what he describes as an ideological isolationism that had characterized the Jewish sects of the Second Temple period; see *ibid.*, 30, and see also *idem*, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 125–27. I am not persuaded by Cohen's definition of ancient Jewish sectarianism as a symptom of ideological competition, for the nature of the evidence does not allow us to definitively describe the respective ideologies of the sects at any given point in time. Albert I. Baumgarten (*The Flourishing of the Jewish Sects*, 7) offers a more basic definition of ancient Jewish sectarianism citing its sociological determinants, positing that the ancient Jewish sects "differentiated between Jews who were members of their sect and those not" on the basis of their respective attitudes towards the practices and beliefs of other Jews.

¹³ Cohen, "The Significance of Yavneh," 49. For illustration of early rabbinic attitudes on the implications of heresy, see e.g., *t. Sanhedrin* [*Sanh.*] 13.5, which includes the *minim* among those whom the rabbis consider destined for eternal damnation for having separated themselves from their fellow Jews. For further discussion of this assignment and its background in ancient Jewish thought, see David Flusser, "Some of the Precepts of the Torah from Qumran (4QMMT) and the Benediction against the Heretics [Hebrew]," *Tarbiz* 61 (1992) 333–74, at 333–42 (reprinted in *idem*, *Qumran and Apocalypticism* [Hebrew], vol. 2 of *Judaism of the Second Temple Period* [ed. Serge Ruzer; Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi/Magnes, 2002] 58–99, at 58–67).

¹⁴ For examples of early rabbinic criticism of the *'am ha-'areš*, see e.g., *m. 'Abot* 2.5, 3.14; *m. Horayot* [*Hor.*] 3.8; *San.* 7.7; *t. 'Abodah Zara* [*'Abod. Zar.*] 3.9–10; *t. Hor.* 2.10, with discussion in Aharon Oppenheimer, *The 'Am Ha-Aretz: A Study in the Social History of the Jewish People in the Hellenistic-Roman Period* (trans. I. H. Levine; Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des hellenistischen Judentums [ALGHJ] 8; Leiden: Brill, 1977) 114–17. For discussion of how this invective factors into the proposed paradigm of "ideological pluralism," see Shaye J. D. Cohen, "The Rabbi in Second-Century Jewish Society," in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 3: *The Early Roman Period* (ed. William Horbury et al.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 922–90, at 959–61, who suggests that the early rabbis' wariness of the *'am ha-'areš* was an expression of their own self-identification as "distinct from the masses of the Jews" (*ibid.*, 961) and symptomatic of a characteristically condescending attitude towards those masses. He implies, however, that the *'am*

'areš ultimately did not effectuate an irreconcilable schism with the rabbis, the very fact that some rabbis sought to reject them indicates that the social program supposedly devised at Yavneh was hardly comprehensive. Consequently, one must wonder how the sages of the Yavneh generation were able to reach a consensus on the definition of heresy, or *minuth*. The social classification of *minuth* appears in the earliest stratum of rabbinic literature and can be traced as early as the famous *birkat ha-minim*, a malediction directed against Jewish heretics that was supposedly instituted at Yavneh.¹⁵ Although later texts typically apply the term to Christians, the earliest rabbinic documents describe a variety of Jewish heretics as *minim*, including mystics, magicians, and gnostics along with Christian Jews. In contrast to their general position on the wayward 'am ha-'areš, the rabbis do not appear to have been interested in re-educating the *minim* or bringing them into the fold of normative Judaism. The manifestations of heresy assigned to these individuals appear to reflect insecurities and misgivings about contemporary Jewish beliefs

ha-'areš remained within the bounds of normative Judaism envisioned by the rabbis, suggesting that their "ethic of separation and distinctiveness was tempered by a democratic idealism, which urged all Jews to study Torah and accept the rabbinic way."

¹⁵ Although the reference dates to the early third century C.E., the Tosefta (*t. Berakot* [*Ber.*] 3.25) mentions a preexisting prayer that referred to the *minim*, apparently synonymous with the *birkat ha-minim*. The explicit association of the *birkat ha-minim* with the Yavneh generation first appears in the late account in the Palestinian Talmud, ca. fourth century C.E. (*y. Ber.* 2.5 5a, *y. Ber.* 4.3 8a; cf. *b. Ber.* 28b–29a). On the character and design of this prayer, see Reuven Kimelman, "Birkat Ha-Minim and the Lack of Evidence for an Anti-Christian Jewish Prayer in Late Antiquity," in *Aspects of Judaism in the Graeco-Roman Period* (vol. 2 of *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*; ed. E. P. Sanders et al.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981) 226–44. An explicit reference to Christians known from a medieval manuscript from the Cairo Genizah was most likely inserted only after the era of Constantine; see Pieter W. van der Horst, "The Birkat ha-minim in recent research," *Expository Times* [*ExpTim*] 105 (1993–1994) 363–68 (reprinted in idem, *Hellenism–Judaism–Christianity: Essays on Their Interaction* [Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1994] 99–111). Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 67–73, maintains the late dating of the anti-Christian interpolation, but suggests that the perceived threat of Christianity was the primary impetus for the rabbis' composition of the prayer. Cf. Flusser, "Some of the Precepts of the Torah" 366–74 (repr. idem, *Judaism of the Second Temple Period*, 2.91–99), who argues that the benediction originated among in the late Second Temple period as a malediction against the "separatists" (Heb. פְּרוֹשִׁים) mentioned alongside the *minim* in *t. Ber.* 3.25. He bases his argument on the employment of the same term in the Dead Sea Scrolls (4QMMT C 7–8) and in early rabbinic texts (e.g., *m. 'Abot* 2.5; *t. Sanh.* 13.5) in reference to social "outsiders" (Flusser, *ibid.*, 357–63 [repr. idem, *Judaism of the Second Temple Period*, 82–88]). Flusser erroneously presumes that we can distinguish two phases in the development of the original benediction, which at first referred only to the "separatists" but was emended at Yavneh to refer to the *minim* as well (for this suggestion, see Saul Lieberman, *Tosefta Ki-Fshutah*, Order Zera'im, Pt. 1 [Hebrew] [3d ed., New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 2001] 53–54). Although *t. Ber.* 3.25 offers no indication of such development, Flusser's observation of the diverse subject matter of the original prayer weakens Boyarin's intimation that it was directed against any specific group, let alone a group within another group (i.e., the Christian *minim*). Of no merit whatsoever is the suggestion of David Instone-Brewer, "The Eighteen Benedictions and the *Minim* before 70 CE," *Journal of Theological Studies* (new series) [*JTS* (n.s.)] 54 (2003) 25–44, at 40–44, that the prayer was based on a pre-70 C.E. Pharisaic curse of the Sadducees.

and practices that the rabbis considered irreconcilable with their own religious perspectives.¹⁶

The fact that the sources do not report any dissent over the classification indicates that the broad criteria for *minuth* were sufficiently agreeable to all parties of the early rabbinic movement. These criteria, however, are never defined in explicit terms. The rabbinic texts evince little substantive interest in the mechanics of heresy, offering only sporadic and vague references to the behavior and beliefs of the *minim*. Just as their Christian counterparts developed the anathema of heresy to legitimize their own conceptions of orthodoxy, the early rabbis appear to have devised the category of *minuth* to encompass all sorts of Jews whose religious practices or beliefs located them outside the bounds of their own ideal for a normative rabbinic Judaism.¹⁷ Yet although the *minim* did not constitute an organized sect, it is clear that the early rabbis considered them to be no more tolerable than actual sectarians.

How did the rabbis achieve this ambiguous consensus? I believe that the answer to this question lies not in their efficiency but in the social reality of their agenda. The basic concept of heresy implies that the early rabbinic sages shared a common sense of self-identity that presupposed a definable set of 'other Jews' as their theoretical opponents. This aspect of their group identity was not new. Although the rabbis initially tried to distance themselves from their sectarian forebears, the parameters

¹⁶ On the variety of Jewish practices that the rabbis classified as symptoms of *minuth*, see e.g., Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism* (Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity [SJLA] 25; Leiden: Brill, 1977) 57–59, 109–34; Stuart S. Miller, "The *Minim* of Sepphoris Reconsidered," *Harvard Theological Review* [HTR] 86 (1993) 377–402. The rabbis only began to conflate Christians of Gentile and of Jewish extraction as *minim* following the rise of imperial Christianity and the consequent diminution of the Jews' civil rights and social status, at which point their rhetoric shifted from an inner Jewish critique to an extramural polemic; for discussion, see Richard Kalmin, "Christians and Heretics in Rabbinic Literature of Late Antiquity," *HTR* 87 (1994) 155–69; Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 220–25. For treatments addressing the functions of *minuth* as a rhetorical trope in later rabbinic literature, see Christine E. Hayes, "Displaced Self-Perceptions: The Deployment of *Minim* and Romans in b. Sanhedrin 90b–91a," in *Religious and Ethnic Communities in Later Roman Palestine* (ed. Hayim Lapin; Studies and Texts in Jewish History and Culture 5; College Park, Md.: University Press of Maryland, 1998) 249–89; Naomi Janowitz, "Rabbis and Their Opponents: The Construction of the 'Min' in Rabbinic Anecdotes," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* [JECS] 6 (1998) 449–62; Gideon Bohak, "Magical Means for Handling *Minim* in Rabbinic Literature," in *The Image of the Judaeo-Christians in Ancient Jewish and Christian Literature* (ed. Peter J. Tomson and Doris Lambers-Petry; WUNT 158; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2003) 267–79.

¹⁷ For this observation, see Martin Goodman, "The Function of *Minim* in Early Rabbinic Judaism," in *Geschichte–Tradition–Reflexion. Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag*, Bd. 1: Judentum (ed. Peter Schäfer; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1996) 501–10, at 508–9, and see also Janowitz, "Rabbis and Their Opponents," 459–60. On early Christian construction of heresy as a categorical opposition to orthodoxy, see Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (ed. Robert A. Kraft and Gerhard Krodel; trans. a team from the Philadelphia Seminar on Christian Origins; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971) xxi–xxv, and see Michel Desjardins, "Bauer and Beyond: On Recent Scholarly Discussions of Αἵρεσις in the Early Christian Era," *Second Century* [SecCent] 8 (1991) 65–82, who discusses recent critical refinements of Bauer's thesis.

of their new ideological platform had largely been assumed from the Pharisees.¹⁸ While the Pharisees had indeed maintained an exclusive social ethic, this feature of the sect was not essential to its ideological platform. In Cohen's formulation, theirs was a "sectarianism focused on law" rather than on covenantal exclusivity.¹⁹ The early rabbis thus managed to retain the religious tenets of Pharisaism while divesting themselves of the factious sociopolitical agenda that had become a de facto aspect of the sect. The same sectarian paradigm was favored by the Sadducees, whose legal disposition apparently was tolerable enough to find room under the pluralistic umbrella of the rabbinic movement.²⁰ Yet the rabbinic design for social

¹⁸ Cohen, "The Significance of Yavneh," 40–42, suggests that the early rabbis intentionally obscured their movement's roots in the Pharisaic tradition as part of their effort to erase the memory of sectarianism. This suggestion is reinforced by overall tenor of the religious reform introduced at Yavneh that Cohen describes in his article. Nevertheless, the rabbis' ambiguous acknowledgment of Pharisaic influence on the religious ideology of their new movement does not amount to a denial that the connection actually existed, as argued repeatedly by Jacob Neusner; see e.g., idem, *From Politics to Piety: The Emergence of Pharisaic Judaism* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973) 66; idem, "Josephus' Pharisees: A Complete Repertoire," in *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity* (ed. Louis H. Feldman and Gohei Hata; Detroit: Wayne State University, 1997) 291–92. Evidence substantiating the ideological continuity between Pharisaism and the rabbinic movement is abundant, and can be found in the works of Josephus (see Seth Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaeoan Politics* [Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition 18; Leiden: Brill, 1990] 200–8) and in the Dead Sea Scrolls, (see e.g., Daniel R. Schwartz, "MMT, Josephus and the Pharisees," in *Reading 4QMMT: New Perspectives on Qumran Law and History* [ed. John Kampen and Moshe J. Bernstein; [SBLSymS] 2; Atlanta: Scholars, 1996] 67–80, at 72–80; James C. VanderKam, "Peshier Nahum and Josephus," in *When Judaism and Christianity Began: Essays in Memory of Anthony J. Saldarini*, Vol. 1: *Christianity in the Beginning* [ed. Alan J. Avery-Peck et al.; JSJSup 85; Leiden: Brill, 2004] 299–311).

¹⁹ Cohen, "The Significance of Yavneh," 31. The centrality of legal interpretation had motivated Jewish sectarian tendencies since the beginning of the Second Temple period; see Morton Smith, "The Dead Sea Sect in Relation to Ancient Judaism," *New Testament Studies* [NTS] 7 (1961) 347–60 (repr. idem, *Historical Method, Ancient Israel, Ancient Judaism* [vol. 1 of *Studies in the Cult of Yahweh*; ed. Shaye J. D. Cohen; Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 130; Leiden: Brill, 1996] 168–83). The etymology of the name "Pharisee" is often assumed to derive from the Hebrew verb פָּרַשׁ, literally "to separate" or "to specify," although if this is the case, it is likely that this label was originally assigned to the founders of the sect by people outside of their group; for discussion, see Albert I. Baumgarten "The Name of the Pharisees," *Journal of Biblical Literature* [JBL] 102 (1983) 411–28. Flusser, "Some of the Precepts of the Torah," 366–74 (repr. idem, *Judaism of the Second Temple Period*, 2.91–99), suggests that the designation was originally imposed by Temple authorities who disapproved of the Pharisees' factionalism.

²⁰ Josephus does not offer an estimate of the number of Sadducees active prior to the war, although he indicates that their numbers were much lower than those of the Pharisees (*Ant.* 13.297). He further claims (*Ant.* 18.17) that the Sadducees typically conceded to the Pharisees in matters of practical law, although this statement has no evident bearing on their ultimate reconciliation with the Pharisees; see Steve Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees: A Compositional-Critical Study* (Studia Post-Biblica [StPB] 39; Leiden: Brill, 1991) 353–54. Irrespective of how it happened, however, a number of witnesses indicate that Sadducean legal exegesis remained a viable force within the rabbinic movement. On the function of the "Sadducee vs. Pharisee" disputation texts, see Cohen, "The Significance of Yavneh," 32–34; Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees*, 231–37.

homogeneity naturally would have faced challenges from those Jews whose prior ideologies dictated that they could not accept outsiders as equals. This sectarian paradigm, inherently irreconcilable with the agenda of early rabbis, would have furnished the most accessible template for their definition of heresy.²¹

Among the many Jews who had maintained exclusive social ethics in the late Second Temple period, we know of two distinct groups: the Christians and the Essenes.²² There is no doubt that a substantial number of Christians survived the war and remained in the vicinity of Judaea.²³ Accordingly, it is no surprise that some

²¹ In a recent study sharing certain thematic issues with my own, Adiel Schremer has suggested that the rabbinic category of *minuth* was predicated on strategies of scriptural interpretation similar to those employed by the Qumran community to reinforce its platform of voluntary social isolation. While his empirical thesis is slightly more demonstrable than my inferential argument, Schremer does not adequately explain why the rabbis would have adopted what he describes as a common Jewish legal rubric of separatism only to turn it on its head and reformulate it as a rubric of exclusivism. Resisting the current scholarly consensus regarding the level of popular influence of the rabbis in the tannaitic period that educates the current study, Schremer interprets their silence on the issue of relative social status as positive evidence of their superior social position. He further suggests that the rabbis' empowered position allowed them the leeway to dictate the laws of *minuth* over the socially inferior groups who fell under that category. While I agree that the rabbis used the idea or heresy to reinforce extant social boundaries rather than to construct new ones, Schremer's failure to distinguish rhetoric from reality renders his argument regarding the legal basis of *minuth* largely ineffective. See Adiel Schremer, "Seclusion and Exclusion: The Rhetoric of Separation in Qumran and Tannaitic Literature," in *Rabbinic Perspectives: Rabbinic Literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls, Proceedings of the Eighth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature, 7–9 January, 2003* (ed. Steven D. Fraade and Aharon Shemesh; STDJ; Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

²² As noted by Cohen, "The Significance of Yavneh," 30, who claims that these sects claimed "exclusive possession of the truth," i.e., who believed that their respective groups were parties to exclusive covenants with God. Although this description can reasonably be applied to certain early Christians, its application to the Essenes must be deduced from the evidence of the Dead Sea Scrolls; for discussion, see John J. Collins, "The Construction of Israel in the Sectarian Rule Books," in *Judaism in Late Antiquity, Part 5: The Judaism of Qumran: A Systematic Reading of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Vol. 1: *Theory of Israel* (ed. Alan J. Avery-Peck et al.; Handbuch der Orientalistik [HO] 55; Leiden: Brill, 2001) 25–42. Although we cannot arbitrarily extrapolate information about the Essenes' sectarian platform from the writings of the Qumran community, this particular aspect of their communal discipline seems to have been inherent to the broader phenomenon of Essene sectarianism. For example, the idea of a sectarian covenant is a central feature of the Damascus Document's foundation narrative; see e.g., CD 3.13, 8.17–18, with discussion in Collins (ibid., 26–30). For a thorough comparison of the sectarian disciplines of the Essenes and of one notable early Christian community, see Graham M. Stanton, "Matthew's Gospel and the Damascus Document in Sociological Perspective," in idem, *A Gospel for a New People: Studies in Matthew* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992) 85–107.

²³ Information on Christianity in Judaea-Palestine in the decades following 70 C.E. is scant, appearing mostly in later sources; for preliminary discussion of the extant evidence, see Seán Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian, 323 B.C.E. to 135 C.E.: A Study of Second Temple Judaism* (Wilmington, Del.; Glazier, 1980) 344–56. A few early Christian sources report that the Christian Jews associated with the apostolic church of Jerusalem survived the war by removing itself to various locations in provincial Syria bordering the territory of Judaea; see Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* [Hist.Eccl.] 3.5.3; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 29.7.7–8, 30.2.7 (Pella); *Pseudo-Clementine*

of the earliest rabbinic references to *minim* clearly refer to Christian Jews.²⁴ This fact naturally raises the question of whether we can likewise detect the presence of Essenes within the ranks of the *minim*.²⁵

The diverse nature of the evidence does not allow us to discern a cogent sectarian platform among the diverse testimonies to *minuth*. We may, however, attempt to identify characteristically Essenic traits in behavioral patterns attributed to certain *minim*. Although the terms of their sectarian expression likely varied from one Essene to another, Josephus and Philo indicate that the Essenes maintained established patterns of behavior that differentiated the sect from the rest of Jew-

Recognitions [Ps.-Clem. *Recog.*] 1.37.1–4, 1.39.1–3 (elsewhere in Syria). The story, however, is rather sketchy and appears to have been devised in an attempt to confer apostolic authority on a local church that was founded after the end of the apostolic period; see “Appendix: The Successors of Earliest Jerusalem Christianity: An Analysis of the Pella Tradition,” in Gerd Luedemann, *Opposition to Paul in Jewish Christianity* (trans. M. Eugene Boring; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989) 200–13. I intend to discuss the Jewish social context of early Syro-Palestinian Christianity more extensively in my doctoral dissertation, currently in preparation.

²⁴ A narrative unit spanning *t. Hullin* [*Hul.*] 2.22–24 relates two separate incidents where Jews are criticized for voicing support for Jesus, although only the second story explicitly associates this practice with *minuth*. An additional tannaitic reference to Christianity appears in *t. Yadayim* [*Yad.*] 2.13 (repr. *t. Šabbat* [*Šabb.*] 13.5), which juxtaposes manuscripts of “the gospels” (Heb. גלגליות; cf. Gk. εὐαγγέλια) with other “books of the *minim*.” Although these references refer to personages of the late first and early second centuries, their appearance in documents redacted in the early third century precludes us from gauging their historical accuracy. For exhaustive treatments of these well studied passages and their parallels elsewhere in rabbinic literature, see Dan Jaffé, *Le judaïsme et l’avènement du christianisme. Orthodoxie et hétérodoxie dans la littérature talmudique I^{er}–II^e siècle* (Patrimoines; Paris: Cerf, 2005) 117–312, although readers should be aware of the author’s occasional overconfidence in the documentary value of these witnesses.

²⁵ Daniel Boyarin has recently cited the parallel epistemological functions of the early rabbinic and Christian conceptions of heresy in support of his argument that early rabbis actually devised the terminology of *minuth* as an analogue to the Christian conception of αἵρεσις (see note 17 above). According to Boyarin, this common classification was the result of a “mutual and parallel shaping of heresy as otherness in second-century rabbinic and Christian discourse” (Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 54–55; see also Stephen Goranson, “Others and Intra-Jewish Polemic as Reflected in Qumran Texts,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment* [ed. Peter W. Flint and James C. VanderKam; 2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1998–1999] 2.534–51, at 536). This theory would preclude the possibility that the rabbinic conception of *minuth* may be read to correspond with the Jewish sects (Gk. αἵρεσις) of the Second Temple period. Boyarin cites David Runia’s definition of the Second Temple era Jewish αἵρεσις as “a party or sect marked by common ideas and aims,” contrasting this usage with the connotation of “a group that propounds false doctrine” associated with the rabbinic/Christian conception of heresy (Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 55; see David T. Runia, “Philo of Alexandria and the Greek *Haeresis*-Model,” *Vigiliae Christianae* [VC] 53 [1999] 117–47, at 118. For a complementary discussion of the usage of the Greek term in the work of Josephus and in the New Testament, see Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees*, 125–28). He reinforces this suggestion by intimating Greek lexical influence, presumably through Christian literature, on the use of the verbal abstract *minuth* to connote a religious taxonomy (Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 55; see also Goodman, “The Function of Minim,” 503–4). Accordingly, he argues that the early rabbinic application of the *minuth* terminology to the *birkat ha-minim* is a retrojection of later editors and provides evidence neither for its use in the period immediately following 70 C.E. nor, by extension, in the period prior to 70 C.E. While Boyarin is correct in affirming that we cannot unequivocally use the rabbinic references to the *birkat ha-minim* to trace the term *minuth* to the first century, his

ish society. Admission to the sect required the Essenes to undergo a process of secondary socialization through which they committed themselves to a lifestyle that was designed to resist the social reality of their times.²⁶ In doing so, the Essenes imbued their sectarian ideology with a sense of difference that commanded the attention of their contemporaries. Albert Baumgarten has described how the sect's "unwillingness [. . .] to adopt the trappings of 'modern' life" molded their sectarian identity, their traditionalist behavior designed "to reinforce the chasm which divided them from others, outside their group."²⁷ In other words, the sect

theory regarding its development is less compelling. Boyarin adduces no evidence of a Jewish-Christian dialogue current to the tannaitic era that might have provided a means for this sophisticated exchange of theological ideas between the two parties. This is not to say that there was no such communication in this period; see e.g., Marc Hirshman, *A Rivalry of Genius: Jewish and Christian Biblical Interpretation in Late Antiquity* (trans. Batya Stein; Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996) 31–41, who discusses the citation of Jewish religious factionalism in his apology for Christianity in work of the second century writer Justin Martyr (see esp. Justin, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* [*Dial.*] 80.3–4). But as far as I can tell, the information was traveling in only one direction as this point in time. Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 40–44, plausibly situates Justin's meditation within a common rabbinic/Christian discourse of group definition but fails to explain why the rabbis might have considered Christianity an existential challenge to Judaism at this time. With no further substantiating evidence to support it, Boyarin's observation that the rabbinic concept of *minuth* serves the same rhetorical function as the Christian αἵρεσις simply does not constitute a valid argument for the interdependence of the two terms. I therefore do not consider his theory to complicate my own suggestion that early rabbis might have devised the category of *minuth* in reference to the type of Jewish sectarianism current to the late Second Temple period.

²⁶ For discussion of the epistemological implications of secondary socialization, see Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966) 138–47. The process of secondary socialization requires one to internalize a subjective reality that is somehow opposed to the version of reality that has previously been impressed upon him or her. The newly adopted version of reality is characteristically legitimated through a revised epistemology, which interprets the present "so as to stand in a continuous relationship with the past, with the tendency to minimize such transformations as have actually taken place (*ibid.*, 163)." This tendency is blatantly obvious in certain of the archaizing behavioral tendencies of the Essenes. For example, recent studies on the Hebrew dialect favored by the Qumran community have suggested that the Essenes assumed identification with a idealized biblical past that stood in tension with the increasingly progressive social climate current to Judaea in the first century C.E. William M. Schniedewind, "Qumran Hebrew as an Antilanguage," *JBL* 118 (1999) 235–52, at 242–51, sees the unique medium of Qumran Hebrew as "a language for the community alone, which in itself highlights the community's insulation" from their surroundings (*ibid.*, 251). See also Steve Weitzman, "Why Did the Qumran Community Write in Hebrew?" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* [*JAOS*] 119 (1999) 35–45, at 43–45, who suggests that the sect favored an archaic literary medium to reflect "its self-image as a transcendent community; its efforts to compensate for a lack of external validation; its creation of social borders between itself and outsiders (*ibid.*, 45)."

²⁷ Albert I. Baumgarten, "He Knew that He Knew that He Knew that He was an Essene," *JJS* 48 (1997) 53–61, at 60. See also *idem*, *The Flourishing of the Jewish Sects*, 112–13, for further reflection on how the Essenes' fundamentalist behavior effectuated the social boundaries, which set the sect apart from their contemporaries. For a complementary assessment of the cultural significance of religious expression, see Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in *idem*, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973) 87–125.

devised and maintained unique patterns of social behavior both to inculcate its sectarian ethos upon its members as well as to broadcast its agenda to the wider Jewish populace. If we accept that the Essenes represented a substantial and visible section of the Jewish population in the period prior to the revolt, it is unlikely that the sect could have simply disappeared from the social landscape over the course of the war. Testimony to the continued occurrence of these behavioral patterns in the work of the early rabbis might therefore indicate the continued occurrence of Essene sectarianism after 70 C.E.

■ Aspects of Essene Sectarianism after 70 C.E.

In this section of the paper, I shall identify and briefly discuss a series of references to the customs of certain *minim* that could likewise be ascribed to Essenes on the basis of independent witnesses to the behavioral conventions of the sect. The references are culled from the Mishnah and the Tosefta, two complementary collections of the earliest rabbinic legal materials. Compiled in the early third century, these materials date from quite a bit later than period when the Essenes are known to have flourished. This prohibitive gap between the two data sets precludes any attempt to establish direct and absolute continuity between the Essenes and the *minim* in question. Moreover, while the witnesses to the Essenes describe the behavior of an identifiable group of people, the rabbinic references represent a legal rhetoric that cannot be definitively tied to such a group. I intend only to argue that the rabbis' citation of some of the more salient expressions of Essene sectarianism as manifestations of heresy demonstrate that post-70 C.E. Jewish society continued to provide ample space for modes of religious expression that had been developed by the Essenes. I will offer a more speculative theory regarding the possibility of actual continuity between the Essenes and the phenomenon of *minuth* in the following section.

One well-known aspect of the Essenes' lifestyle was their organization into private communities.²⁸ As I mentioned earlier, these communities were not isolated to secluded sectarian settlements. Those Essenes who lived interspersed throughout the broader populace of Judaea formed private sectarian communal organizations. Philo,

²⁸ Josephus: *B.J.* 2. 120–127; Philo: *Prob.* 76, *Hypoth.* 11.4–5; Pliny, *Naturalis historia* [Nat.] 5.73; see also Albert I. Baumgarten, “He Knew that He Knew,” 55–57, who cites Josephus, *B.J.* 2.124, as evidence that Essene communities were sufficiently distinctive to have been recognizable to Essenes and non-Essenes alike. For organizational patterns within the Qumran sect, see Charlotte Hempel, “Community Structures in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Admission, Organization, Disciplinary Procedures,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment*, (ed. Peter W. Flint and James C. VanderKam; 2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1998–1999) 2.67–92. For discussion of these communal structures in light of the Essene sect, see John J. Collins, “Forms of Community in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Emanuel: Studies in Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov* (ed. Shalom M. Paul et al.; Vetus Testamentum Supplements [VTSup] 94; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 97–111.

for instance, reports that Essenes maintained private sectarian synagogues where they assembled to partake in rites specific to their sect.²⁹ One may easily presume that knowledge of these private sectarian organizations was common among the Essenes' non-sectarian neighbors. One early rabbinic text critically observes that certain *minim* maintained private houses of worship where they practiced rites that the rabbis considered illegitimate or otherwise unacceptable.³⁰ The alleged heretics who attended these meetings are to be distinguished from those whom the rabbis sought to disenfranchise by means of the *birkat ha-minim*. Needless to say, the implication that these *minim* voluntarily separated themselves from their Jewish neighbors is consistent with Essene behavior.

Although the Jerusalem Temple had been the official institution of the Jewish cult prior to its destruction, the Essenes were known to have maintained their own sacrificial rites in defiance of the Temple authorities. The Essenes apparently rejected the Temple cult in the very earliest stages of their sect's development, but they continued to practice alternative sacrificial rites outside of the Temple precinct.³¹ It is therefore appropriate that the early rabbis created laws forbidding the

²⁹ Philo, *Prob.* 81; for discussion of this passage and suggestive parallels in the Damascus Document (i.e., CD 11.22–23) and in the Dead Sea Scrolls, see Donald D. Binder, *Into the Temple Courts: The Place of the Synagogues in the Second Temple Period* (SBL Dissertation Series [SBLDS] 169; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999) 453–68. I should note that there is some ambiguity in Philo's claim that the Essenes gathered in synagogues. Philo only rarely uses the term συναγωγή to refer to an actual house of prayer (cf. idem, *Legatio ad Gaium* [*Legat.*] 311, *De somniis* [*Somn.*] 2.127), typically using the term προσευχή for that function. It should be noted, however, that he usually uses the latter term in reference to Jewish houses of worship in Egypt, whereas his discussion of the Essenes is set in Judaea. On the applications of these two terms in reference to Jewish communal institutions in Egyptian Jewish texts, see Aryeh Kasher, "Synagogues as 'Houses of Prayer' and 'Holy Places' in the Jewish Communities of Hellenistic and Roman Egypt," in *Ancient Synagogues: Historical Analysis and Archaeological Discovery* (ed. Dan Urman and Paul V. M. Flesher; 2 vols.; StPB 47; Leiden: Brill, 1995) 1.205–20. Kasher (ibid., 209) observes that the former term usually indicates a communal gathering rather than the building designed for that purpose, although Philo's clearly refers to synagogues as specific places in *Prob.* 81.

³⁰ *t. Šabb.* 13.5. This observation presupposes that the rabbis did not wield authority over an institutionalized synagogue comparable to the system of ecclesiastical authority that developed in the early Church. On the variety of synagogue types in Roman Palestine, see Stuart S. Miller, "The Rabbis and the Non-Existent Monolithic Synagogue," in *Jews, Christians, and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue: Cultural Interaction during the Greco-Roman Period* (ed. Steven Fine; London: Routledge, 1999) 57–70.

³¹ For discussion of the factors that likely motivated the Essenes' departure from the Temple cult, see Albert I. Baumgarten, "Josephus on Essene Sacrifice," *JJS* 45 (1994) 169–83, and see idem, *The Flourishing of the Jewish Sects*, 108–9. Josephus (*Ant.* 18.19) notes that they continued to perform ritual sacrifices, albeit in private locations and according to their own standards of practice. This testimony is reinforced by frequent reference to ritual sacrifice as a component of the Qumran community's liturgy; for discussion, see Joseph M. Baumgarten, "Sacrifice and Worship among the Jewish Sectarians of the Dead Sea (Qumrān) Scrolls," *HTR* 46 (1953) 141–59 (reprinted in idem, *Studies in Qumran Law* [SJLA 24; Leiden: Brill, 1977] 39–56); Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 289–312. See also Michael E. Stone, "The Axis of History at Qumran," in *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea*

practice of certain sacrificial rites on the grounds that they recalled the behavior of the *minim*.³² This legislation clearly indicates that certain alleged Jewish heretics were suspected of having practiced sacrificial rites not sanctioned by the Temple authorities. The Essenes certainly would have fallen under this category had it been current to the period when the Temple still stood. It is therefore significant that the rabbis described would-be schismatics of a prior era using the very same legal rubric that they applied to their contemporary heretics.

Another prominent manifestation of the Essenes' dissent from the Temple authorities was their use of an alternative festival calendar. The Dead Sea Scrolls reveal that the Qumran community maintained a 364-day solar calendar rather than the 354-day lunar calendar used to regulate the Temple cult. Endorsement of this calendar is found in the Damascus Document and in a number of pre-Hasmonaean texts recovered at Qumran. This phenomenon indicates that use of the solar calendar

Scrolls, Proceedings of the International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 12–14 January, 1997 (ed. Esther G. Chazon and Michael E. Stone; STDJ 31; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 133–49, at 148–49, who suggests that the Qumran community based its self-representation of estrangement from the Temple cult upon a pre-Essenic notion found in the Enochic literary tradition.

In light of the preponderance of evidence indicating that the Essenes practiced sacrificial rituals outside of the Temple, I should note that the Damascus Document alludes to the possibility that some Essenes were inclined to return to the Temple at a relatively early stage in the sect's history (CD 12.1, 20.22–23). Moreover, Philo, *Prob.* 75, claims that the Essenes offered no sacrifices at all. Philo's claim, which expressly contradicts the testimony of Josephus, is particularly troubling. It seems, however, that Philo was motivated to make this claim in the service of his typological depiction of the sect as the paradigm of Jewish piety. Accordingly, it would have been against his interest to depict the Essenes as violating the scriptural laws against sacrificing outside of the Temple; cf. Tessa Rajak, "Ciò che Flavio Giuseppe Vide: Josephus and the Essenes," in *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period: Essays in Memory of Morton Smith* (ed. Fausto Parente and Joseph Sievers; StPB 41; Leiden: Brill 1994) 141–60 (repr. eadem, *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome: Studies in Cultural and Social Interaction* [Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums [AGJU] 48; Leiden: Brill, 2001] 219–40), who favors Josephus's eyewitness testimony to the Essenes' behavior over Philo's rhetorically motivated portrait of the sect. Although the Essenes are the only Jewish group of Judaea known to have maintained this practiced sacrificial rites outside of the Jerusalem Temple, it is clear that unsanctioned sacrificial rites were regularly performed by Jews living in the Diaspora during the period of the Second Temple; for discussion, see Anders Runesson, *The Origins of the Synagogue: A Socio-Historical Study* (Coniectanea biblica: New Testament Series [ConBNT] 37; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001) 446–50 (Egypt), 464 (Sardis). I thank Dr. Runesson for these references.

³² *m. Hul* 2.9 (repr. *t. Hul.* 2.19); *t. Yoma* 2.10. While the rabbis apparently devised this legislation in reference to a theoretical scenario when the Temple was not in disrepair, it is possible that they directed it toward individuals who continued to practice sacrificial rites after its destruction; for discussion of other rabbinic legislation acknowledging this phenomenon, see Baruch M. Bokser, *The Origins of the Seder: The Passover Rite and Early Rabbinic Judaism* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1984) 101–6.

The mysterious group called the "sons of the water drinkers" are reported in one tannaitic source to have removed themselves from the Temple cult in the late Second Temple period and to have prophesied and practiced unauthorized sacrificial rites in the desert; see *Mekhilta* [*Mek.*] ad Exod 18:27 (Yitro, Amalek 4 [ed. Horovitz-Rabin, 200], repr. Yitro, Amalek 2 [ed. Lauterbach,

was ingrained among the Essenes from the very outset of their sect's formation.³³ Early rabbinic law assumed that eyewitness testimony to the appearance of a new moon was required for the regulation of the Temple's official calendar. Accordingly, the rabbis recognized the danger of accepting the testimony of potentially unreliable witnesses. They justified this decision by alleging that certain *minim* had sought to corrupt the Temple's calendrical cycle with false testimony.³⁴ Once again, the rabbis' application of the term *minim* to sectarians of the Second Temple period indicates a continuity of thought between that era and their own. Although the accusation of actual interference may be spurious, the desire to thwart the Temple authorities by corrupting their calendar is consistent with the Essenes' protest against the Temple cult.³⁵

The Essenes' preoccupation with ritual purity was another distinguishing characteristic of the sect. Josephus reports that the Essenes maintained higher standards of cleanliness than other Jews, avoiding a range of defiling activities and frequently immersing in ritual baths.³⁶ His testimony is supported by stipulations in

2.187]; cf. *Pesiqta de-Rab Kahana* [*Pesiq. Rab Kah.*] add. 5 [ed. Mandelbaum, 464]). This group, evidently similar to the Qumran community, are perhaps likewise to be identified as Essenes; for discussion, see Safrai, "The Memory of the Rabbis," 535–37. Although the rabbinic editors do not indict these people as *minim*, their polemical tone clearly indicates that they were aware of such sectarian behavior and considered it unacceptable.

³³ On the role of calendrical disputes in the formation of the Essene sect, as reflected in the Damascus Document, see e.g., CD 3.13–15, 6.18–19, 12.3–6, 16.2–4. On the pre-Hasmonaean origins of the Essenes' solar calendar, see James C. VanderKam, *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Measuring Time* (London: Routledge, 1998) 113–16, and for discussion of the role of calendrical issues within Qumran community, see *ibid.*, *passim*. Cf. Sacha Stern, "Qumran Calendars: Theory and Practice," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context* (ed. Timothy H. Lim; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000) 179–86, who questions whether the solar calendar was put to practical use at Qumran.

³⁴ *m. Roš Haššanah* 2.1, *m. Roš Haš.* 1.8.; cf. *t. Roš Haš.* 1.15, where this accusation is levied upon a certain Boethusian, a specific type of Jewish sectarian active in the late Second Temple period. For discussion of the early rabbinic standards for calendrical regulation, see VanderKam, *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 36–40. Calendrical disputes with the Boethusians appear elsewhere in tannaitic legal texts (e.g., *m. Menaḥot* [*Menaḥ.*] 10.3; cf. *m. Ḥagigah* [*Ḥag.*] 2.4), which indicates that the either the mishnaic or the toseftan recension of this law has been modified. Nonetheless, the fact that it is attributed to the *minim* in the Mishnah indicates that the editors of that document considered the issue to have been relevant to other types of *minim* than the Boethusians. A tenuous theory equating the Boethusians with the Essenes has no bearing on this subject; for a critique of this argument, see Regev, "Were the Priests All the Same?" 185–88.

³⁵ Cf., however, IQpHab 11.2–8, which describes an actual confrontation between a priest from Jerusalem and a representative of the Qumran community over the intercalation of the date of Yom Kippur. For discussion of this episode and its relevance to dispute over the cultic calendar, see Shemaryahu Talmon, "Yom Hakippurim in the Habakkuk Scroll," *Biblica* 32 (1951) 549–63 (reprinted in *idem*, *The World of Qumran from Within: Collected Studies* [Jerusalem: Magnes, 1989] 186–99); VanderKam, *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 44–45. Although this episode may be no more genuine than the rabbinic editors' accusation, it serves as an incisive counterpoint to their claim that sectarians were the more insidious party to this dispute.

³⁶ Josephus, *B.J.* 2.129, 2.138, 2.150. Mason, "What Josephus Says about the Essenes," 438, notes that Josephus offers this appraisal in a positive light, drawing comparisons to other instances where the historian presents ritual immersion amongst the Jews as a virtue (e.g., *Ant.* 3.263; *Vita* 11).

the Qumran legal codes and by the high concentration of ritual bath installations, or *miqva'ot*, at the site.³⁷ This aspect of Essene behavior certainly would have been visible in the public arena. Josephus reports that a senior Essene who came into contact with an Essene of inferior rank would have to purify himself “as after contact with an alien.” This implies that contact with non-Essenic Jews also would have entailed ritual purification.³⁸ The Essenes’ avoidance of physical contact with other Jews and their predilection for immersion would not have gone unnoticed by their contemporaries. An early rabbinic text seems to chide certain *minim* for such fastidiousness regard, discouraging other Jews from adhering to the high standards of ritual purity, which they maintained while handling water.³⁹ The rabbinic dictum does not fault these *minim* for ignoring the law, implying on the contrary that their standards of purity were too excessive for practical application.⁴⁰ This appraisal would have been equally relevant to the Essenes.

³⁷ See e.g., 1QS 3.4–6, 3.9, 5.14; for further texts and discussion, see Hannah K. Harrington, *The Purity Texts* (Companion to the Qumran Scrolls 5; London: T&T Clark, 2004). See also Joseph M. Baumgarten, “Liquids and Susceptibility to Defilement in New 4Q Texts,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* [JQR] 85 (1995) 91–101, for discussion of the purification rituals implied in 4Q274 and 4Q284. On the occurrence and functions of ritual baths at Qumran, see Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 147–50. Cf., however, Katharina Galor, “Plastered Pools: A New Perspective,” in *Khirbet Qumrân et ‘Ain Feshkha* (vol. 2 of *Fouilles de Khirbet Qumrân et de ‘Ain Feshkha*; ed. Jean-Baptiste Humbert and Jan Gunneweg; Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus [NTOA], Series Archaeologica 3; Fribourg: Presses Universitaires de Fribourg, 2003) 291–320, who argues for the reclassification of many of the supposed ritual baths as water cisterns.

³⁸ See Josephus, *B.J.* 2.150: καθάπερ ἀλλοφύλῳ συμφυρέντας. Josephus’s testimony is reinforced by the Community Rule document from Qumran, which dictates that certain high-ranking members of the community were to completely refrain from interaction with non-members (1QS 6.20–22). We can nevertheless safely presume that most Essenes were allowed to maintain contact with people outside of the sect, as is implied by Josephus’s and Philo’s accounts of their commercial contacts and their travels; for discussion, see Albert I. Baumgarten, *The Flourishing of the Jewish Sects*, 104–7.

³⁹ *t. Parah* 3.3. An alternate version of this text (*m. Parah* 3.3) clearly evinces editorial revision, modifying the context of the polemic and assigning the interest in purity to the Sadducees rather than to the *minim*. The indictment against the offenders is framed in a puzzling parable: the *minim* are criticized for hanging stone cups on the horns of oxen, so that when they bent their necks to drink, the cups would be filled. The precise force of the Tosefta’s critique is somewhat obscure, apparently implying that certain *minim* wished to avoid physical contact with impure waters such as those from which an ox might drink. To this cf. Josephus, *B.J.* 2.138, who alleges that Essene initiates were forbidden from touching the “purer of the holy waters” (καθαρωτέρων τῶν πρὸς ἀγνεῖαν ὑδάτων) so designated by their superiors.

⁴⁰ A corresponding ruling elsewhere in the Tosefta (*t. Hag.* 3.19) explicitly alleges that the early rabbis thought that conflict over the preparation of ritually pure waters had been one of the causes for the departure of certain Jews from the Temple cult in the late Second Temple period. In light of the discussion above, this appears to be a reference to the Essenes or another group, who likewise practiced alternative sacrificial rites; see Albert I. Baumgarten, “Josephus on Essene Sacrifice,” 180–81, and see the references in notes 31–32 above. A related observation can be made about a group to whom the early rabbis refer as ‘morning immersers,’ who are not singled out as *minim* but are nonetheless criticized for their excessive observance of ritual purification (*t. Yad.* 1.20). This group, which appears identical to a Jewish sect to whom several Church Fathers and early

The Essenes' high standards of ritual purity entailed similarly stringent dietary regulations. Josephus notes that the Essenes maintained rigorous standards of ritual precaution in preparing their meals and that they refused to eat food prepared by anyone else. Furthermore, both Josephus and Philo report that the Essenes avoided elaborate meals, while Josephus specifies that they limited their portions to one plate of food per person.⁴¹ Like their avoidance of physical contact with other Jews, the Essenes' peculiar dietary restrictions would not have gone unnoticed by their contemporaries. Accordingly, an early rabbinic text warns that the *minim* were not to be trusted to have prepared their food according to acceptable *halakhic* standards.⁴² The fact that the same text contrasts the *minim* to Gentiles indicates

Christian documents refer as 'hemerobaptists' (see e.g., Hegesippus ap. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.22; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 17.1–5), represents a clear example of the continued occurrence of characteristically Essenic behavior among Jews after 70 C.E. For discussion of this group, see Kurt Rudolph, "The Baptist Sects," in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 3: *The Early Roman Period* (ed. William Horbury et al.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 471–500, at 475–77, and cf. Safrai, "The Memory of the Rabbis, 535.

⁴¹ Josephus: *B.J.* 2.130–133, 2.139, 2.143, *Ant.* 18:22; Philo, *Hypoth.* 11.11. Accordingly, the Qumran legal codes prescribe strict eating habits for the community; see e.g., 1QS 5.13–16, 6.3. For discussion of diet and meals amongst the Essenes and in the Qumran community, see Albert I. Baumgarten, *The Flourishing of the Jewish Sects*, 93–96; idem, "Finding One's Self in a Sectarial Context: A Sectarial's Food and Its Implications," in *Self, Soul, and Body in Religious Experience* (ed. Albert I. Baumgarten et al.; Studies in the History of Religions [SHR] 78; Leiden: Brill, 1998) 125–47; Philip R. Davies, "Food, Drink and Sects: The Question of Ingestion in the Qumran Texts," *Semeia* 86 (1999) 151–63.

⁴² *t. Hul.* 2.20–21. On the development of early rabbinic standards of *kashruth*, see Jacob Neusner, "Law and Theology in the Mishnah-Tractate Hullin," in *Verbum et Calamus: Semitic and Related Studies in Honour of the Sixtieth Birthday of Professor Tapani Harviainen* (ed. Hannu Juusola et al.; Studia orientalia [StudOr] 99; Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society, 2004) 191–97. The epistemology of the laws of *kashruth* in the period prior to the redaction of the Mishnah by necessity remains obscure. Yet the implication that the Essenes maintained fixed standards of practice in this regard accords with other witnesses to such customs among Jews of the Second Temple period; see discussion in E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 BCE–66 CE* (London: SCM, 1992) 214–17.

Scholars who have dealt with this particular *halakhah* in the past have often assumed that the type of *minuth* at issue is Christianity, or, more accurately, a Christianized form of Judaism, as the text of the Tosefta explicitly contrasts the *minim* in question to Gentiles; see e.g., Philip S. Alexander, "'The Parting of the Ways' from the Perspective of Rabbinic Judaism," in *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways, A.D. 70 to 135, The Second Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium on Earliest Christianity and Judaism (Durham, September, 1989)* (ed. James D. G. Dunn; WUNT 66; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1992) 15–16. The basis of this assumption seems to be the fact that neglect of the laws of *kashruth* was one of Christianity's definitive points of departure from the Jewish tradition, and furthermore, the fact that two adjacent pericopes clearly refer to Christian *minim* (*t. Hul.* 2.22–24). But while it is possible the law was intended to address Christians among other alleged Jewish heretics, the assumption that it refers specifically to Christians cannot be justified on the basis of the text. Aside from the issue of *kashruth*, the ruling refers to several other symptoms of *minuth*, which appear to be drawn from a stereotypical legal rubric otherwise irrelevant to Christian practice; cf. Schremer's discussion of this pericope in idem, "Seclusion and Exclusion." Furthermore, the Tosefta use the term שחיטה, a *terminus technicus* for Jewish ritual slaughter, in reference to the method by which the *minim* in question prepared their meat. This strongly suggests that the *minim* in question did in fact practice some form of ritual slaughter rather than ignore the

that these alleged heretics were censured not for ignoring the food laws but for maintaining idiosyncratic standards of *kashruth*. Once again, the same charge of undue caution would have been relevant to the Essenes.

Both Josephus and Philo report that the Essenes assumed a unique mode of dress, wearing a uniform of simple white linen when going about their daily life.⁴³ Confirming this claim on the basis of textile fragments recovered in the vicinity of Qumran, Jodi Magness has stressed how this fashion would have contrasted with that of the general populace of Judaea. Literary sources and material finds from other sites indicate that most ancient Jews adopted contemporary Roman styles, favoring clothing that featured colored and decorated textiles.⁴⁴ Accordingly, one early rabbinic text censures the *minim* for dressing only in white and refusing to wear colored clothing.⁴⁵

I noted earlier that the rabbis conceived the social classification of *minuth* in reference to those Jews whom they considered unfit for their corrective social agenda. Although the rabbis evince little interest in why the so-called *minim* refused to subscribe to their program, their condemnation of these people as heretics rather than as apostates indicates that the *minim* bore distinct religious ideologies

law altogether, as one might expect a Christian to have done. Given that the *minim* in question were Jews who practiced some form ritual slaughter, one might still suggest that the law was directed toward Christian Jews who observed laws akin to the rabbinic rubric of *kashruth* (see Origen, *Commentarium in Matthaei* [Comm. Matt.] 11.12; *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* [Ps.-Clem.] Recog. 4.36.4; Ps.-Clem. Hom. 7.8.1). But according to that logic, the Tosefta is equally likely to refer to any alleged Jewish heretics who observed such laws.

⁴³ Josephus, *B.J.* 2.126, 2.137, 2.140; Philo, *Prob.* 86, *Hypoth.* 11.12. For discussion, see Albert I. Baumgarten, "He Knew that He Knew," 57; idem, *The Flourishing of the Jewish Sects*, 101.

⁴⁴ See Jodi Magness, "Women at Qumran?" in *What Athens Has to Do with Jerusalem: Essays on Classical, Jewish, and Early Christian Art and Archaeology in Honor of Gideon Foerster* (ed. Leonard V. Rutgers; Interdisciplinary Studies on Cultural Interaction in Antiquity 1; Leuven: Peeters, 2002) 89–123, at 109–22 (repr. eadem, *Debating Qumran: Collected Essays on Its Archaeology* [Interdisciplinary Studies on Cultural Interaction in Antiquity 4; Leuven: Peeters, 2004] 113–49, at 135–49); eadem, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 193–202. See also Shaye J. D. Cohen: *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1999) 30–34, who likewise concludes that Jews in the Second Temple period would not typically have been distinguishable from non-Jews by their chosen mode of dress. This opinion is shared by others who have discussed of ancient Jewish modes of dress; see e.g., Lucille A. Roussin, "Costume in Roman Palestine: Archaeological Remains and the Evidence from the Mishnah," in *The World of Roman Costume* (ed. Judith Lynn Sebesta and Larissa Bonfante; Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994) 182–90; Catherine Hezser, *The Social Structure of the Rabbinic Movement in Roman Palestine* (TSAJ 66; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1997) 123–30.

⁴⁵ *m. Megilla* [Meg.] 4.8. This accusation is followed by several others implicating the behavior of the *minim*, such as their recitation of peculiar liturgies and their refusal to wear shoes. While these traits might have characterized some Essenes, we have no explicit testimony to confirm this. It seems more likely that this passage contains a litany of allegations directed against various types of heretics including, but not limited to, the Essenes. The legislation against white clothing, perhaps the most obvious parallel with the practice of the Essenes, has often been noted; see e.g., Alan F. Segal, *Rebecca's Children: Judaism and Christianity in the Roman World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986) 149.

of their own. One early rabbinic text alludes quite specifically to the challenge presented by these individuals. Rabbi Tarfon, a sage of the mid-second century C.E., is reported to have said that he would rather associate with Gentiles than with *minim*, for “pagan worshipers do not recognize [God] and they scoff at Him, but those people (i.e., the *minim*) do recognize Him and scoff at Him.”⁴⁶ Engaged in a common religious discourse, the rabbis considered the influence of the *minim* a considerable threat to their proposed homogeneous social reform. Acknowledging that these alleged heretics invested their behavior with the weight of their sectarian ideologies, the early rabbis classified these traits not merely as quirks but as symptoms of serious religious dissent.

In none of the aforementioned rabbinic references to the behavior of the *minim* did the editors seek to justify or to explain their objections. But their reasoning would have been clear to those readers who were able to identify the behavioral conventions of Essene sectarianism. While their suggestive parallels with Essene practice do not represent definitive proof that these laws were created in reference to actual Essenes, an instructive parallel may be deduced from the early rabbis’ views on Christianity.⁴⁷ Like the Essenes, the Christian Jews recognized the God of Israel, expounded on the Hebrew Scriptures, and organized themselves into sectarian communities. The early rabbis noted that these alleged heretics accorded importance to Jesus and that they composed their own religious texts.⁴⁸ But the rabbis initially identified them neither as ‘Christians,’ nor ‘Jesus-believers,’ nor any other appellation than *minim*, heretics.⁴⁹ Although the rabbis clearly knew

⁴⁶ *t. Šabb.* 13.5. On the implications of this statement, see Sacha Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings* (AGJU 23; Leiden: Brill, 1994) 111–12, who sees it as a reluctant admission on the part of the rabbis that the *minim* remained party to God’s covenant with Israel. Cf. Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Who Was a Jew? Rabbinic and Halakhic Perspectives on the Jewish-Christian Schism* (Hoboken, N.J.: Ktav, 1985) 63: “Rabbi Tarfon regards these Jewish Christians as worse than idolaters, for while it was understandable that a pagan might embrace the new faith, it was a great source of frustration that Jews, raised in the traditions of Judaism, would do so as well.” Pace Schiffman, this statement was not directed against the Christians alone but against the *minim* in general and is equally suited to the Essenes (see my discussion at note 30 above).

⁴⁷ For the following, see Goodman, “Sadducees and Essenes after 70 CE,” 354. Readers will find that some of the important issues that I have raised in this paper find expression in Goodman’s preliminary methodological inquiry (see especially *ibid.*, 350–52). In my opinion, Goodman’s suggestion that the lack of testimony to the Sadducees and Essenes in rabbinic literature does not amount to a denial of their existence after 70 C.E. finds support in my conclusions.

⁴⁸ See references in note 24 above.

⁴⁹ It is worth noting that later generations of rabbis, primarily those active in Babylonia after the fourth century, did adopt the term נוצרים (cf. Gk. Ναζαραῖος) as a reference to all Christians, whether of Jewish or Gentile origin, following a common pattern among Aramaic speaking peoples of their age. Although this term seems to have originated as early as the apostolic era as an internal Jewish designation for Christian Jews (Acts 24.5; cf. Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* [Marc.] 4.8), its original meaning appears to have become distorted through time. For an enlightening discussion of the term’s origins and historical development, see Simon C. Mimouni, “Les nazoréens. Recherche étymologique et historique,” *Revue Biblique* [RB] 105 (1998) 208–62. Although Mimouni seems to think otherwise (*ibid.*, 232–44), none of the examples of the term that he adduces from rabbinic literature can reliably be assigned to the tannaitic era.

that the Christians maintained a unique sectarian ideology, they did not care to distinguish them from other types of Jewish heretics.⁵⁰ But just as the absence of the title 'Christian' in rabbinic texts does not mean that Christians were absent from the social world of the early rabbis, the lack of explicit testimony to the Essenes does not mean that the sect had ceased to exist. Like the Christians, the Essenes were noted for their unique take on the Jewish tradition, but the rabbis simply did not care enough to distinguish the alleged heresy of Christianity from any other variety of *minuth*. Accordingly, just as we can recognize *minim* as Christians when the rabbis assigned to them characteristically Christian traits, we should consider the possibility that those *minim* to whom they assigned characteristically Essenic traits were, in fact, Essenes.

■ The Persistence of the Essenes

Is it possible that the Essenes remained so intransigent after the destruction of the Temple, while their contemporaries adapted their respective sectarian strategies to meet the needs of a people in crisis? The contrasting responses certainly would have been consistent with the respective strategies of the various sects. When the Temple was destroyed, the ethnic power structure of Judaea was dismantled. As I discussed earlier, the Pharisees and Sadducees who survived the war pursued a common course of pragmatic social reform. The Christian Jews also absorbed the effects of the disaster, albeit in an entirely different manner than most others. But whereas these groups were predisposed toward functional response to the emerging circumstances, the Essenes would have been determined to weather the crisis by remaining loyal to their sectarian principles. Josephus notes that the Essenes maintained a staunchly deterministic outlook, preferring "to leave everything in the hands of God," while the Dead Sea Scrolls indicate that this fundamentalist outlook was deeply entrenched in the sect's self-identity.⁵¹ In fact, whereas the loss of the Temple cult represented an existential challenge to some sectarian movements, the Essenes could not have experienced the crisis in the same way as these others. As

⁵⁰ Needless to say, the rabbis preserved only a few details about Christian Jews who lived in their midst. The Gospel of Matthew, however, composed in close proximity to the early rabbinic movement, offers a suitable contextual parallel for the religious platform underlying the Christian *minim*, who appear in early rabbinic literature. For methodological considerations supporting this point of view, see Anthony J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994) 13–18.

⁵¹ Josephus, *Ant.* 18.18: ἐπὶ μὲν θεῷ καταλείπεν φιλεῖ τὰ πάντα; cf. *Ant.* 13.171–173, where Josephus contrasts this attitude with those of the Pharisees and Sadducees. See James C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1994) 76–78, for reflections of this attitude in the Dead Sea Scrolls, e.g., CD 3.15–16, 3.21–23. Cf. the tendencies toward functional response among the other Jewish sects identified by Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees*, 277–91 (Pharisees), and 298–308 (Sadducees). See also idem, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 67, on the reaction to the destruction of the Temple among Christians who had previously aligned themselves with the Temple authorities.

I noted earlier, participation in the Temple cult had never served as the basis for Essene sectarianism. Quite to the contrary, they had removed themselves from the Temple cult long before its demise.⁵² The Damascus Document, a sectarian legal code widely regarded as our most reliable means of access to the origins of Essene sectarianism, incorporates a foundation narrative, which stipulates that the sect's members were to form and to maintain social boundaries in compliance with their private covenant with God.⁵³ The Dead Sea Scrolls indicate that some Essenes continued to let sectarian discord and covenantal exclusivity dictate their agenda for generations following the emergence of their sect.⁵⁴ Accordingly, the destruction of the Temple was simply not as acute a threat to the constitutional integrity of Essenism, as it was to the respective sectarians' platforms of the other sects.

⁵² See discussion at notes 31–32 above. We may cite the Qumran sectarians as examples of Essenes who had adopted a design for life that was focused on a decentralized cult; see Lawrence H. Schiffman, "Community Without Temple: The Qumran Community's Withdrawal from the Jerusalem Temple" in *Gemeinde ohne Tempel/Community without Temple. Zur Substituierung und Transformation des Jerusalemer Tempels und seines Kults im Alten Testament, antiken Judentum, und frühen Christentum* (ed. Beate Ego et al.; WUNT 118; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1999) 267–84.

⁵³ On the sectarian covenant, see e.g., CD 3.13, 8.17–18, and on the formation and maintenance of sectarian boundaries, see e.g., CD 3.15–17; see further Collins, "The Construction of Israel," 26–30, for discussion of the implications of this new covenant. On the use of the Damascus Document as a historical document, see Michael A. Knibb, "Exile in the Damascus Document," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* [JSOT] 25 (1983) 99–117, and further, Philip R. Davies, *The Damascus Covenant: An Interpretation of the 'Damascus Document'* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplements [JSOTSup] 25; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982) 21–26, 41–47; idem, "CD and the History of the Essenes: A Reconsideration in Light of Criticism" in idem, *Behind the Essenes: History and Ideology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (BJS 94; Atlanta: Scholars, 1987) 33–49. Davies treats the text as a purely literary artifact but offers more positive conclusions regarding its use in reconstructing the history of the 'Damascus' sect. Although Davies denies the possibility of salvaging a cogent historical framework for the 'Damascus' sect's origins, he acknowledges its value as an indicator of the Qumran community's sectarian identity (idem, *The Damascus Covenant*, 202–4; cf. idem, "The Prehistory of the Qumran Community," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty Years of Research* [ed. Devorah Dimant and Uriel Rappaport; STDJ 10; Leiden: Brill, 1992] 116–25, at 120–21, where he directly associates the 'Damascus' sect with the Essenes). For further demonstration of the inconsistent historiographical and literary conventions of the Damascus Document, see Philip R. Callaway, *The History of the Qumran Community: An Investigation* (JSPSup 3; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988) 99–133. Even those skeptical of directly identifying the Qumran community as Essenes often acknowledge that the Damascus Document seems to offer insight onto the foundation of the Essene sect; see e.g., Albert I. Baumgarten, "Who Cares and Why Does It Matter? Qumran and the Essenes, Once Again!," *DSD* 11 (2004) 174–90, at 189–90.

⁵⁴ The leaders of the Qumran community, for instance, attempted to reinforce their group's communal discipline by reiterating elements of what they believed to be their parent sect's ideological platform as set forth in the Damascus Document. For illustrations of the Qumran community's commitment to their fundamental sectarian ideology as expressed in their social discipline, see e.g., Steven D. Fraade, "To Whom It May Concern: 4QMMT and Its Addressee(s)," *RevQ* 19 (2000) 507–26; Maxine L. Grossman, *Reading for History in the Damascus Document: A Methodological Method* (STDJ 45; Leiden, Brill, 2002) 127–61; James C. VanderKam, "Those Who Look for Smooth Things, Pharisees, and Oral Law," in *Emanuel: Studies in Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov* (ed. Shalom M. Paul et al.; VTSup 94; Leiden: Brill,

Furthermore, the outcome of the war likely did not dramatically affect the socioeconomic status of the Essenes. Vespasian's liberal policies allowed the Jews to resume life in Judaea much as it had been prior to the war. Josephus reports that the Roman Empire retained only one property, the town of Emmaus, for the settlement of military veterans, returning most of the land that it had seized to its original owners.⁵⁵ Although a number of urban Jews from the cities throughout Judaea were temporarily displaced from their homes, Josephus reports that only the city of Jerusalem lay in ruins. But while the area in the vicinity of Jerusalem suffered a considerable decline in population, Jewish settlement was not interrupted in most of the country.⁵⁶ While it is conceivable that Essenes were among those affected by these developments, there is no reason to presume that they were affected in disproportion to their numbers.⁵⁷ Accordingly, the effects of the war should have devastated neither the sect's demographic basis nor its collective economic condition.

2003) 465–77. On the assumption and development of the laws of the Damascus Document by the Qumran community, see Charlotte Hempel, "The Laws of the Damascus Document and 4QMMT," in *The Damascus Document: A Centennial of Discovery, Proceedings of the Third International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 4–8 February, 1998* (ed. Joseph M. Baumgarten et al.; STDJ 34; Leiden: Brill, 2000) 69–84; Sarianna Metso, "The Relationship between the Damascus Document and the Community Rule," in Joseph M. Baumgarten et al., *ibid.*, 85–93. Certain laws of the Damascus Document also appear in the Temple Scroll, although it is unlikely that this document originated within the Qumran community; see the comments of Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Sectarian Law in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Courts, Testimony, and the Penal Code* (BJS 33; Chico, Calif.: Scholars, 1983) 13–14, 17.

⁵⁵ Josephus *B.J.* 7.216–217. Josephus reports that Vespasian instructed the Roman administrators of Judaea simply to return or perhaps to sell all the land back to its original owners (παύσαν γῆν ἀποδόσθαι), although this decree applied specifically to properties that had been confiscated rather than to the entire country. For discussion, see Benjamin Isaac, "Judaea after A.D. 70," *JJS* 35 (1984) 44–50 (reprinted in *idem, The Near East Under Roman Rule: Selected Papers* [Supplements to Mnemosyne 117; Leiden: Brill, 1998] 112–19). See also Jack Pastor, *Land and Economy in Ancient Palestine* (London: Routledge, 1997) 160–65, who cites an early rabbinic legal mechanism known as the *sikarikon* which involved the resale of confiscated or abandoned Jewish property to other Jews as evidence for the frequency of this practice in the period following 70 C.E. (see e.g., *m. Gittin* [Git.] 5.6; *t. Git.* 3.10, and cf. Josephus, *B.J.* 6.114–115). It seems more likely, however, that the socio-rhetorical context behind this law is the period following the end of the Bar Kokhba revolt in 135 C.E.; for discussion, see Isaiah M. Gafni, *Land, Center and Diaspora: Jewish Constructs in Late Antiquity* (JSPSup 21; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997) 68.

⁵⁶ On the destruction of Jerusalem, see Josephus, *B.J.* 7.1–4, and on the displacement of Jews from cities and towns that had been ravaged by the wars, see e.g., *B.J.* 4.438, 4.444, 4.448, 4.488, *Vita* 422. For a general socioeconomic overview of the broader province of Judaea following the war, see Martin Goodman, "Judaea," in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 11: *The High Empire, A.D. 70–192* (ed. Alan K. Bowman et al.; 2d ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 664–78, at 664–65.

⁵⁷ Cf., however, the incident mentioned in note 6 above, which seems to refer to a specific instance of persecution against an Essene community. Philo's claim that the Essenes did not acquire large tracts of land (*Prob.* 76) is of little consequence, as the Romans' confiscation of a Jewish property appears to have depended on its owner's participation in the revolt rather than on its monetary value.

For the most devoted Essenes, adherence to their sectarian beliefs required their unflinching commitment to sectarian exclusivity, as long as there were other Jews against whom they could continue to define themselves. It is even conceivable that some Essenes who survived the war continued to impress this conviction upon new initiates to the sect. Yet even if we assume that the deleterious outcome of the revolt caused some Essenes to abandon their sectarian beliefs, it is not likely that they were capable of abandoning their sectarian ways so readily. The Essenes' rigid discipline was part of an institutional order that had successfully protected their sectarian identity for too long to have dissipated so quickly. The generations of sectarian activity prior to the war had effectively reinforced the sect's discipline and steeled its members from the negative outside influences to which they were exposed on a daily basis.⁵⁸ Even those Essenes whose commitment to their sectarian creed wavered as a result of the war would have faced the challenge of resocialization, gradually adapting to their new environment through a process of negotiation with those boundaries of social differentiation that they had once heeded with such caution. It would have taken considerable time and effort for former Essenes to have acclimated themselves to normal social behavior amongst other non-Essenic Jews.⁵⁹ With no alternative institutional paradigm to dictate their behavior, even these pragmatic former sectarians would likely have maintained their Essenic ways for some time after they left the sect.

⁵⁸ Josephus (*B.J.* 2.137–149) provides a detailed account of the Essenes' institutional order, and much of his testimony has been reinforced by corresponding evidence from Qumran; for a thorough discussion of the parallels, see Todd S. Beall, *Josephus' Description of the Essenes Illustrated by the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series [SNTSMS] 58; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 73–99, although cf. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, 88–89, for key points of divergence between the two sets of data. For a thorough treatment of the ideological scheme underlying the Qumran community's institutional order, see in general Schiffman, *Sectarian Law in the Dead Sea Scrolls*; cf. Moshe Weinfeld, *The Organizational Pattern and the Penal Code of the Qumran Sect: A Comparison with Guilds and Religious Associations of the Hellenistic-Roman Period* (NTOA 2; Fribourg: Editiones Universitaires Fribourg, 1986), who unfortunately tends to neglect the impact of ideology upon the group's communal discipline. See Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 53–60, who trace the origins of social institutionalization to a process whereby individual social actors reciprocate typification for one another's previously habitualized behavior. When independent social actors express mutual approval of one another's actions, the common ground furnishes the basis for the subsequent development of fixed patterns of behavior that are directed toward a common agenda. The pursuit of this common agenda motivates the maintenance of the behavior upon which the social institution was founded. Accordingly, it is unrealistic to expect that the Essenes would have ceased simply to behave like Essenes unless they were compelled to desist from doing so by external forces.

⁵⁹ On the implications of resocialization, see Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 157–63, who suggest that this process would require one to reinterpret the past, or at least his or her previous understanding of the past, "to conform to the present reality, with the tendency to retroject into the past various elements that were subjectively unavailable at the time" (*ibid.*, 163). A major hurdle in one's adoption of an alternate version of social reality is the ability to physically segregate one's self from the inhabitants of the social world that he or she is seeking to leave behind (*ibid.*, 158). Naturally, the pace at which they were capable of making such a departure from their sectarian tradition would have varied from one Essene to another.

In short, the events of 70 C.E. had no immediate implications on the welfare of Essene sectarianism, while its theoretical impact on individual Essenes is impossible to measure. I therefore find no reason not to assume that a substantial number of Essenes continued to sustain their belief that they were party to an exclusive covenant with God in the wake of the destruction of the Temple. While other sectarians chose to pursue new avenues of religious expression, the nature of Essene sectarianism discouraged its adherents from acceding to the designs of those others, whom they continued to perceive as antagonistic and inherently inferior. The leaders of the rabbinic movement, spearheading the impetus for social reform, would have had every reason to exclude the belligerent Essenes from their plans for a normative Jewish society.⁶⁰

I can only venture to speculate about the ultimate fortunes of these remaining Essenes. The ultimate success of the rabbinic movement in remedying the major fissures within Jewish society effectively negated the Essenes' *raison d'être*, striking a fatal blow to their institutional order. The gradual homogenization of Jewish society under the canopy of the rabbinic movement deprived the Essenes of the sectarian opponents upon whom they depended to assert their sectarian identity. Consequently, would-be Essenes would have eventually found themselves unable or unwilling to sustain engagement in the sectarian disputes that had once provided the sect's fire. Moreover, their expression of dissent from the Temple administration, as fundamental element of the Essenes' creed, would have eventually lost its appeal in the absence of a functioning Temple cult. In time, the remaining proponents of Essene sectarianism either quietly died out or finally adjusted to the new homogeneous social order in which they reluctantly found themselves.⁶¹

⁶⁰ The Essenes' general avoidance of involvement in local politics distinguished them from the Pharisees and Sadducees, who the early Christians sensibly perceived as antagonistic to their innovative interpretations of Jewish tradition. The early Christians seem likewise to have ignored the introverted Essenes, whose social reticence posed no challenge to their own sectarian interests. For the characterization of the Essenes as social introverts, see Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes, and Sadducees*, 72, as well as Albert I. Baumgarten, *The Flourishing of the Jewish Sects*, 13, who ascribes the same sociological profile to the Qumran community.

⁶¹ Goodman, "Sadducees and Essenes after 70 CE," 347, implies that the *terminus ante quem* for the disappearance of the Jewish sects is the mid-fourth century, when Epiphanius asserts that they had since ceased to exist (*Pan.* 19.5.6–7). I think that it is likely that the viability of Essene sectarianism declined in proportion to the gradually increasing success of the rabbis' agenda for social homogeneity. It is difficult to determine precisely when the rabbinic movement began to achieve widespread influence over the broader Jewish populace, although the developments that most likely accelerated this process were Rome's endorsement of the Jewish patriarch and the consequent institutionalization of rabbinic civil law, ca. early third century C.E. (see Martin Goodman, "The Roman State and the Jewish Patriarch in the Third Century," in *The Galilee in Late Antiquity* [ed. Lee I. Levine; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992] 127–39), and the initial stages of the christianization of the Roman Empire, ca. mid-late fourth century C.E. (see Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society*, 179–202). The former development, however, which coincides with the codification of the Mishnah and the end of the rabbinic movement's tannaitic period, likewise signals the end of the rabbinic editors' attribution of typically Essenic behavior among the *minim*.

■ Conclusions

Although my argument necessarily relies on circumstantial reasoning, I believe that it offers a reasonably logical solution to the problem of why the Essenes seem to disappear from Jewish popular consciousness after the end of the revolt against Rome. The common presumption that the lack of explicit testimony to the Essenes' survival amounts to evidence of their absence from the social world of the rabbis has no merit whatsoever. In sociological terms, the Essenes should have continued to occupy the same location after the war that they occupied before the war. Moreover, what we know of the Essenes prior to the war offers no indication that they would have conformed to the standards of practice and belief devised to cater to a non-sectarian ideology, regardless of how practical that ideology might have been. Although usually unreliable on matters of historical import, rabbinic texts are nevertheless credible and valuable sources of information on the diverse social realities of the times and places in which they were produced. Even if the early rabbinic texts that I cited are not unequivocal evidence that the rabbis of post-70 C.E. Judaea knew the Essenes as contemporaries, opposition to Essene sectarianism certainly would have fallen under the legal rubric that regulated their idea of heresy.

If the early rabbis did invent the legal concept of *minuth* in order to marginalize competing sectarian groups, the example of the Essenes would prove instructive for the study of other subgroups in ancient Jewish society. Generation after generation, the rabbis remained engaged in a discourse of group identity, which yielded an often severe rhetoric of tolerance and intolerance. Naturally, the distinction most frequently addressed in their literature is that between Jew and Gentile. Gentiles,

Although certain of the earlier references to Essenic behavior are subjected to subsequent exegetical development in later rabbinic literature, there is no evidence that the continued occurrence of such behavior later than the tannaitic period. It therefore seems likely to me that the sect dissipated within a few generations of the destruction of the Temple.

Consequently, I find no merit in the suggestion that the manuscripts of the Damascus Document recovered from the Cairo Genizah indicate a continuous tradition of Essenism into medieval times, *pace* Magen Broshi "Anti-Qumranic Polemics in the Talmud," 599–600 (repr. idem, *Bread, Wine, Walls and Scrolls*, 222). While I can offer no better explanation of the appearance of the medieval manuscripts, an alternate explanation of the phenomenon is suggested by a number of ancient and medieval testimonies to the discovery of scrolls in the Dead Sea region. For instance, in the early ninth century, the Nestorian Patriarch Timothy I wrote a letter referring to "books of the Old Testament and others in the Hebrew script" discovered in a cave near Jericho, which attracted the attention of local Jews, and the tenth century Karaite historian Jacob Al-Qirqisani referred to books had been recovered from a cave by Jewish sectarians who proceeded to model their own behavior on the rules of the ancient sect described therein. It is possible that the copies of the Damascus Document recovered from the Genizah were produced by individuals, who had access to these early precursors the Dead Sea Scrolls. For a recent discussion of these and other references, see Jeffrey H. Tigay, "'Archaeology' of the Bible and Judaism in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages," in *The Archaeology of Jordan and Beyond: Essays in Honor of James A. Sauer* (ed. Lawrence E. Stager et al.; Studies in the Archaeology and History of the Levant 1; Winona Lake, Ind.: Harvard Semitic Museum/Eisenbrauns, 2000) 490–97, at 491–94.

however, seem to have been too obviously foreign to have been viewed as viable competitors for the support of the Jewish masses.⁶² More immediately threatening to their ideological platform were those Jews whose choices of religious expression were incompatible with their own idealized vision for a normative Judaism. Although their abuse of these individuals as heretics may seem unduly abrasive by today's standards, this tactic was essential to the rabbis' broader agenda for social reform.

Yet the fact that the rabbis did not view the *minim* as legitimate practitioners of Judaism should not discourage modern readers from considering whether or not these alleged heretics saw themselves as legitimate Jews. Aware that their own brand of religious expression could not negate the right of their opponents to count themselves as Jews, the rabbinic rhetoric of *minuth* extended only as far as the theoretical covenant between God and Israel. If my argument regarding the fate of the Essenes is at all convincing, it should be clear that some of the *minim* considered themselves to be not only legitimate Jews, but the very best Jews, much in the way that the rabbis viewed themselves. Accordingly, we must not neglect to consider the likelihood that other of the so-called *minim*, including those who appear to have been Christians, continued to see themselves as Jews as well.

⁶² See discussion in Steven D. Fraade, "Navigating the Anomalous: Non-Jews at the Intersection of Early Rabbinic Law and Narrative," in *The Other in Jewish Thought and History: Constructions of Jewish Culture and Identity* (ed. Laurence J. Silberstein and Robert L. Cohn; New York: New York University Press, 1994) 145–65, as well as Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, 215–23.

Was Heracleon a Valentinian? A New Look at Old Sources*

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Heracleon was a great second-century Christian thinker, and the author of the first known commentary on a New Testament text, the Gospel of John. Although we do not have Heracleon's commentary itself, Origen integrated a great deal of it into his own commentary on the fourth gospel.

Historically, Heracleon has always been associated with the school founded by the infamous heresiarch Valentinus and many have considered him to be one of the best-known Valentinians along with such figures as Ptolemy, Theodotus, and Marcus, although modern scholars have hotly debated the degree to which one may properly describe him or his teachings as "Valentinian."¹ This is natural

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¹ Many scholars consider Heracleon's teachings considerably different from those characteristic of Valentinianism (Orig ne, *Commentaire sur saint Jean* [ed. and trans. C cile Blanc; SC 120; Paris: Cerf, 1966]; Domenico Devoti, "Remarques sur l'anthropologie d'H r cl on: les psychiques," SP 16 (1985) 143–51; Eug ne de Faye, *Gnostiques et gnosticisme* [Paris: Geuthner, 1925]; Ekkehard M hlenberg, "Wieviel Erl sungen kennt der Gnostiker Herakleon?" ZNTW 66 [1975] 170–93; Gilles Quispel, "From Mythos to Logos," *Eranos Jahrbuch* 39 [1970]) 323–40). Others (Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism* [New York: Harper & Row, 1987]; Jean-Michel Poffet, *La m thode ex g tique d'H r cl on et d'Orig ne, commentateurs de Jn 4: J sus, la Samaritaine et les Samaritains* [Paradosis:  tudes de litt rature et de th ologie anciennes 28, Fribourg:  ditions universitaires, 1985]; Fran ois Sagnard, *La gnose valentinienne et le t moignage de Saint Ir n e* [ tudes de philosophie m di vale 36, Paris: J. Vrin, 1947]; Jean-Daniel Kaestli, "L'ex g se valentinienne du quatri me  vangile," in *La communaut  johannique et son histoire: la trajectoire de l' vangile de Jean aux deux premiers si cles* [ed. Jean-Daniel Kaestli et al., Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1990] 323–50) have tended more towards seeing Heracleon as a faithful student who, in the words of Alan E. Brooke, "did not materially alter the system of Valentinus" (Heracleon, *The*

enough, given that the very meaning of describing someone as a "Valentinian" remains somewhat unclear.

If to count as a Valentinian means to identify oneself as such, then Valentinians probably did not exist; our evidence suggests that only the enemies of "Valentinianism" referred to people as "Valentinians."² Other meanings, however, may prove more relevant for our purposes. The term "Valentinian" could refer to a disciple or student of Valentinus or to someone who belonged to or whom others identified with the school or tradition founded by Valentinus. It could also refer to someone whose beliefs or approach conform to what a given author understands as characteristically "Valentinian" beliefs or approach.

Discussions ancient and modern over Heracleon's alleged links to Valentinus have not always clarified what these linkages mean. In our investigation into Heracleon's status and allegiances, we shall look at the testimony of the patristic authors. Now, modern scholarship has often assumed that these authors have identified Heracleon unambiguously as a member and representative of Valentinus's school, but in what follows we shall demonstrate that for most of the authors the situation appears by no means so clear as that—rather, they show signs of uncertainty and hesitancy.

We shall also see that while Clement, on the one hand, clearly links Heracleon to Valentinus's school, Origen, on the other, does not, and even seems to cast doubt on this linkage. In examining their testimony, we shall see that whether or not one considers Heracleon a Valentinian varies depending on how one defines the term and that one can clear this apparent contradiction by understanding what it means for each of these authors to associate someone with a given school or teacher. We shall argue that, based on our analysis of Origen's discussion of Heracleon, modern scholarship can no longer continue simply to assume Heracleon's Valentinian status. Rather, we must, first, define what exactly we mean by calling someone a Valentinian, and, second, examine carefully whether Heracleon fits that definition.

■ The Ancient Heresiologists

All the ancient authorities, who give any indication of Heracleon's allegiance or lineage, associate Heracleon in some way with Valentinus. When we examine the relevant texts closely, however, it becomes apparent that only Clement of Alexandria straightforwardly and unambiguously asserts that Heracleon belongs to Valentinus's school. For the purposes of this investigation, we may leave to one

Fragments of Heracleon: Newly Edited from the MSS, with an Introduction and Notes [ed. Alan E. Brooke; Texts and Studies: Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature 1.4; Cambridge: The University Press, 1891] 105).

² Given that the name "Valentinian" is thus derogatory in origin, we might like to replace it. However, two difficulties would arise: the people commonly called "Valentinians" do not seem to have identified themselves as anything other than Christians, and "Valentinian" as a designation has become by now so deeply rooted in scholarship that it would probably be impossible to get rid of it.

side the references to Heracleon found in Photius, Praedestinatus, and Clement of Alexandria's *Eclogae Propheticae*, as they do not contribute to our discussion of Heracleon's affiliation.

a) Irenaeus mentions Heracleon in his *Adversus Haereses* after a satirical dismissal of the Valentinian theory of aeonic emanation.³ Irenaeus argues that Heracleon and Ptolemy emanated from Valentinus, just as the Aeons did from the primal Father. In the conclusion to this section, however, one can see clearly that Irenaeus bases his affiliation of Heracleon and Ptolemy with Valentinus on the basis of their views. He regards everyone who holds the same opinions as they do as an "emanation" of Valentinus. The citation thus tells us that Irenaeus linked Heracleon with Ptolemy in his mind and that he linked both to Valentinus, but it does not directly state that Heracleon studied with or followed Valentinus.

b) In the *Adversus Valentinianos*, Tertullian presents Heracleon as a successor to Ptolemy, both of whom he calls Valentinians, although he admits that they have separated themselves from Valentinus and his beliefs and that the name "Valentinian" represents a designation that polemicists have given them, not one that they have chosen.⁴

c) Hippolytus merely mentions Heracleon in the table of contents to the sixth book of his *Philosophumena*. He says that he intends to discuss "what Simon has dared (τετολμημένα)," and then "what Valentinus has laid down (δογματίζει)," and then adds, "and what is thought (δοκοῦντα) by Secundus, Ptolemy, and Heracleon, and how they have used as their own, but with different words, the thought of those whom the Greeks think wise [i.e., they have all plagiarized the Greek philosophers]."⁵ Note yet again the association of Heracleon with Ptolemy and the separation of their thought from that of Valentinus. The order of names clearly intends to establish a link between Valentinus and Ptolemy and Heracleon. This alleged link does not necessarily have a historical grounding, however, as we see when Hippolytus makes the same implicit link between Simon Magus and Valentinus. Furthermore, while Hippolytus discusses the alleged systems of both Secundus and Ptolemy after the exposition of Valentinus's own system, he says

³ Irenaeus, *Haer.* 2.4.1 (see Irénée de Lyon, *Contre les Hérésies* [ed. Adelin Rousseau and Louis Doutreleau; 2 vols.; SC 293–294; Paris: Cerf, 1982] 2:47).

⁴ Tertullian, *Val.* 4.2 (see Tertullien, *Contre les Valentiniens* [ed. and trans. Jean-Claude Fredouille; SC 280–281; Paris: Cerf, 1980] 87). In this passage, Tertullian aims to reap the rhetorical benefits of two paradoxical assertions simultaneously. On the one hand, he wants to consider them as Valentinians so as to clearly link them to a heretical, debased tradition, i.e. Valentinianism. On the other hand, he uses their deviations from the doctrines of Valentinus to present them as being unfaithful even to their heretical teachings, arguing that only Axionicus among them has adhered to Valentinus's teachings ("solus ad hodiernum Antiochae Axionicus memoriam Valentini integra custodia regularum eius consolatur").

⁵ Hippolytus, *Philosophumena, or the Refutation of All Heresies, Formerly Attributed to Origen, but now to Hippolytus, Bishop and Martyr, Who Flourished about 220 A.D.* 6.2–4 (trans. Francis Legge; Translations of Christian Literature 1.20; London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1921) vol 2, p. 1.

nothing more of Heracleon, which indicates perhaps that Hippolytus did not know Heracleon's system. He knows only that Heracleon has some link to Valentinus.

d) In terms of Heracleon's relation to Valentinus, Pseudo-Tertullian makes a clearer reference than the others cited above but basically follows in the same line. He writes, "There is also Heracleon another heretic, who thinks similarly to Valentinus, but wants to appear to think differently by using a somewhat novel formulation."⁶ In other words, he asserts an association on the level of ideas between the two "heretics" but specifies no direct relationship, and presents a certain distancing of Heracleon's thought from that of Valentinus, as in the reference of Tertullian discussed above.

e) Epiphanius refers to Heracleon as a disciple of Colorbasus, himself a member of Valentinus's school.⁷ Epiphanius also presents Heracleon as influenced by Marcus, an allegation that he supports by taking Irenaeus's description of Marcosian practices and applying it to Heracleon.⁸ Epiphanius's rebuttal of Heracleon appears quite generic and tells us little about Heracleon or his beliefs.

Thus far, then, we see evidence of a heresiological impulse to link Heracleon to Ptolemy and to Valentinus. One could ascribe part of this to a common dependence of the later authors on Irenaeus.⁹ We find it significant, however, that all the later authors go into greater detail regarding the apparent separation and real linkages between Valentinus and Heracleon than does Irenaeus. It therefore seems that Irenaeus had less of a problem with the issue of Heracleon's dependence on Valentinus than did his successors. Irenaeus simply associated the two; later authors had to work hard to give the linkup plausibility.

To sum up, we can say that the above references taken together suggest that Heracleon's teachings had similarities to those of Valentinus, that he had some association with students and coworkers of Valentinus like Ptolemy, and that heresiologists considered it polemically advantageous to describe him as a Valentinian. But we should also note that Heracleon has a much less direct link to Valentinus than, for instance, Ptolemy. His "Valentinian" status remains somewhat ambiguous.

■ Clement

We must still, however, take Clement's reference in the *Stromateis* into consideration. It presents nothing ambiguous or tentative: Clement describes Heracleon as ὁ τῆς Οὐαλεντίνου σχολῆς δοκιμώτατος, "the most celebrated of Valentinus's

⁶ Pseudo-Tertullian, *Adversus Omnes Haereses* 4.4.8 (*Quinti Septimi Florenti Tertulliani Opera* [CCSL 2; Turnhout: Brepols, 1954] 1407). "Extitit praetera Heracleon alter haereticus, qui cum Valentino paria sentit, sed nouitate quadam pronuntiationis uult uideri alias sentire."

⁷ Epiphanius, *Panarion* §36 (see *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, Book 1 (Sects 1–46)* [trans. Frank Williams; Nag Hammadi and Manichean Studies 35; Leiden: Brill, 1987] 236–41).

⁸ Found in Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.21.5.

⁹ See Gérard Vallée, *A Study in Anti-Gnostic Polemics: Irenaeus, Hippolytus and Epiphanius* (Studies in Christianity and Judaism 1; Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1982) 6 n. 5 for a very useful chart detailing the relative dependencies of the heresiologists.

school.”¹⁰ While this assertion may have problematic elements, namely in that it presents Heracleon as much more prominent than in the other accounts, nonetheless it clearly attests to Heracleon’s status as a Valentinian and comes from an early, knowledgeable, and relatively trustworthy source.

Clement’s attitude with regard to Valentinians is nuanced. Speaking generally, he is liberal and comparatively open minded in accepting diversity within Christianity. As Le Boulluec points out,¹¹ Clement derives his dominant model from Greek philosophical schools and thus permits of disagreement. Although one can learn the full truth only from the divine Logos, he admits nonetheless a place within Christianity for debate, argument, and the use of philosophical tools such as dialectic and other forms of sophisticated reasoning. He does, of course, move to a more stereotypically heresiological model, when fundamental, underlying elements of Christianity come into question, but this seems not to have occurred with regard to Valentinus or his followers. One could not say that he approves of them overall, but he found them certainly more acceptable than, for example, the Carpocratians,¹² who remained entirely outside the Christian community.

This appears particularly evident in the passage from *Strom.* 7.17.108 cited above, in which he goes on to cite Heracleon’s exegesis of Luke 12:8–11, which deals with the ways in which one can confess one’s faith. In this passage, Clement identifies Heracleon as belonging to Valentinus’s school simply to specify about whom he is talking; he presents no polemic here.¹³

Clement, then, clearly considers Heracleon a Valentinian. But another author, writing only two generations after Clement, also an Alexandrian, also relatively trustworthy, quite well informed, and familiar with heterodox Christian movements does *not* seem to consider Heracleon a Valentinian—contrary to prior scholarly readings. This author is Origen.

■ Origen

In his *Commentary on John*, Origen quotes extensively from Heracleon’s earlier commentary on that gospel and repeatedly refers to Heracleon.¹⁴ Origen provides far and away our most detailed source for information about Heracleon. Therefore, at this point we would like to examine several significant passages in this work,

¹⁰ Clement, *Strom.* 4.8.73.

¹¹ Alain Le Boulluec, *Clément d’Alexandrie et Origène*, vol. 2 of *La notion d’hérésie dans la littérature grecque, IIe–IIIe siècles* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1985) 264–70.

¹² *Strom.* 3.4.25; see discussion in Le Boulluec, *Clément d’Alexandrie et Origène*, 329–30.

¹³ As Henry Chadwick famously noted, “With the teachings of Basilides and more especially of Valentine, Clement found himself in a fair degree of sympathy” (John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, *Alexandrian Christianity: Selected Translations of Clement and Origen* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954] 31)—and this applies to Valentinus’s school as well.

¹⁴ Regarding the fidelity of Origen’s citations, see Poffet, *Méthode exégétique*, 17–18, and Bart D. Ehrman, “Heracleon and the Western Tradition,” *NTS* 40 (1994) 161–79.

passages where Origen links Heracleon with others, in order to see what light they can shed on Origen's understanding of Heracleon's affiliations.

In *Comm. Jo.* 2.100, by far the most important of these passages, Origen refers to Heracleon as τὸν Οὐαλεντίνου λεγόμενον εἶναι γνώριμον "the one who is said to be a disciple of Valentinus" roughly.¹⁵ Some have read this passage as proof that Origen considered Heracleon a disciple of Valentinus, but such an interpretation remains far from certain.¹⁶

For our present purposes, this passage has two interesting features. The first has to do with the precise meaning of γνώριμος, which can mean "pupil" or "acquaintance."¹⁷ In Christian usage, however, from Justin on, the word often indicates the apostles (οἱ γνώριμοι) and bears the meaning of "disciple" or "follower," a sense that occurs widely in non-Christian writings as well (Xenophon, Strabo, Josephus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Philo, etc.). One has thus no reason not to apply this meaning in the present circumstances.

The second interesting aspect of this phrase lies in the fact that Origen says, not that Heracleon is a disciple of Valentinus, but rather that "it is said (λεγόμενον)" that he is. This clear "it is said" meaning of the passive participle of λέγειν has not changed from classical times down to its use in modern Greek. It indicates that others say such-and-such without necessarily indicating that the author himself says this. In the present case, Origen reports the fact that others have described Heracleon as "being a Valentinian" (τὸν Οὐαλεντίνου λεγόμενον εἶναι γνώριμον).

Now, if Origen had written simply τὸν Οὐαλεντίνου λεγόμενον γνώριμον, omitting the εἶναι, the phrase could then simply identify "Heracleon, that is, the one who is called a disciple of Valentinus." By this Origen would identify a par-

¹⁵ Origen, *Commentarii in evangelium Joannis*. All citations of the *Commentary on John* are translated from the Greek in the appropriate volume of the Sources chrétiennes edition (ed., trans., and introd. Cécile Blanc; Paris: Cerf): Books 1–5: Vol. 1, SC 120 (1966); Books 6 and 10: Vol. 2, SC 157 (1970); Book 13: Vol. 3, SC 222 (1975); Books 19 and 20: Vol. 4, SC 290 (1982); and Books 28 and 32: Vol. 5, SC 385 (1992).

¹⁶ Scholars dealing with Heracleon usually render the passage correctly in translation but tend to pass over its ambiguity. Cristoph Marksches provides one prominent exception to this trend (*Valentinus Gnosticus? Untersuchungen zur valentinianischen Gnosis mit einem Kommentar zu den Fragmenten Valentins* [WUNT 65; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1992] 393) in writing that "Auch Heracleon gehört nicht so eng zu Valentin, wie man gemeinhin anzunehmen bereit ist; hier bleiben Lebenszeit und Ort ebenfalls nur ungefähr eingrenzbar: Origenes bestätigt uns als erster mit einer gewissen Reserve, daß Heracleon für einen persönlichen Schüler Valentins gehalten wurde."

¹⁷ LSJ gives its meanings as "pupil, acquaintance and (exceptionally) kinsman" (Henry George Liddell et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon* [9th edition, revised and augmented; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968] s.v. γνώριμος, §3b). See also Brooke, *Fragments of Heracleon*, 31 n. 2. Marksches presents γνώριμος as a virtual synonym of such words as ἀκουστής and ἀκροατής and of such phrases as οἱ ἀμφὶ τινα and οἱ περὶ τινα (*Valentinus Gnosticus*, 393 n. 37). Rudolph Pfeiffer uses it to mean "acquainted with or a pupil of" (*History of Classical Scholarship: From the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968] 155).

ticular Heracleon as the Heracleon known as a follower of Valentinus in order to distinguish him from other men with the same name.

Even this use of it in order to identify the person under discussion need not mean that Origen himself agrees with the description. Origen frequently uses a bare λεγόμενος to indicate that he reports knowledge, the validity of which he does not vouch for. For example, see *Comm. Jo.* 2.23 (ἡ λεγομένων μὲν οὐδαμῶς δὲ ὄντων θεῶν [speaking of beings which are called gods, but are not]); *Cels.* 7.7 (ὑπὸ μυρίων ἄλλων λεγομένων θεοπρόπων [referring to a thousand other allegedly divine oracles]); or *Cels.* 8.5 (πολλῶν τοίνυν λεγομένων ἢ ὄντων θεῶν [referring to many alleged or real gods]).¹⁸

So one need not read even a bare λεγόμενος as representing Origen's own opinion, and in fact, what we have here seems yet more uncertain. In this passage, it is not a question of describing Heracleon as a Valentinian, but rather acknowledging that some consider him to be one.¹⁹ The sentence as it stands gives us Origen's report that some consider Heracleon a Valentinian rather than Origen's identification of which Heracleon he means. Had Origen wished merely to identify Heracleon, he had no need to include εἶναι. On the other hand, had Origen intended to designate Heracleon as a Valentinian, he could have done without both the λεγόμενον and the εἶναι and could simply have written τὸν Οὐαλεντίνου γνώριμον, a phrasing which would approach much closer in spirit that provided by Clement. In fact, when Origen discusses the group affiliations of others, he tends to use the banal formula οἱ ἀπὸ τοῦ. Here, he probably intends his use of γνώριμον to state precisely what others think about Heracleon.

The fact that Origen takes such pains to signal this identification as one reported by others, using both λεγόμενον and εἶναι, suggests strongly that he does not agree with that identification and distances himself from it, even while using it as a convenient way of indicating the person about whom he writes. Rather than proving that Origen considers Heracleon a Valentinian, as many have assumed, the use of the phrase τὸν Οὐαλεντίνου λεγόμενον εἶναι γνώριμον actually argues that he did not consider Heracleon a Valentinian but knew that others had considered him one.

Origen's opinion is worthy of serious consideration. We know that he was well-informed regarding heterodox Christians in general and Valentinians in specific, through his patron, the previously Valentinian Ambrose. We know as well that he wrote this part of the commentary in Alexandria,²⁰ where just two generations before Clement had written that Heracleon stood out as the most celebrated member of

¹⁸ It should be noted, of course, that a bare λεγόμενος can also be used in contexts where there is no indication that Origen doubts the information.

¹⁹ It is significant that the passage under discussion is the only occasion on which Origen uses the clause λεγόμενον εἶναι.

²⁰ Origen, *Comm. Jo.* 6.2.6–12.

Valentinus's school.²¹ Furthermore, even if Origen knew nothing else of Heracleon's writings or teachings, he had at the very least a familiarity with his commentary on John. Origen based his opinion, then, on knowledge both of Heracleon's reputation and of his actual work.

Although he does not affirm that Heracleon belongs to the Valentinian school, Origen does refer to Heracleon's own circle of followers at least twice (13.114; 13.122; and possibly also 10.117; 13.147–50; 20.54; 20.217–19). He thus presents Heracleon as the head of his own school.²²

In three places Origen associates Heracleon with "the heterodox" always in passages having to do with the subordination of the Creator god, or the Old Testament god, to the real God, or the God of the New Testament (6.116; 13.95; 13.101). Furthermore, he twice associates Heracleon with those who believe that different souls have different natures (20.54, 20.287). These two beliefs, for Origen, often go together and form the basic core of all non-Judaizing heterodoxy, and the denunciation of either or both of them occurs extremely commonly.²³ In his denunciations of them, he frequently calls their adherents "the heretics," or cites as the most notorious proponents of these errors a group made up of Marcion, Valentinus, and Basilides.²⁴ In these cases he uses the names as usually no more than clichés to represent the great, undifferentiated mass of heretical Christians. Such general denunciations do not point towards any one specific heresy.

The last passage that we need to mention occurs at 13.294. In his discussion of John 4:36, Origen points out that both Heracleon and a member of the Church (τις καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικός) might come to the same erroneous conclusion, albeit by different routes, thus implying that, for Origen, Heracleon stands outside the church. This passage, however, contains purely negative information: Origen does not consider Heracleon a member of the Church but leaves his status unspecified.

²¹ Ansgar Wucherpfennig explains this by arguing that Origen, writing forty years or so after Clement, would have heard of Heracleon only through the heresiological literature or through his patron Ambrose, but we have two objections to his argument (*Heracleon Philologus* [WUNT 142, Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2002] 370). First of all, would the fame of the most celebrated Valentinian (according to Clement) have faded so quickly? And secondly, if Ambrose and others vouch for Heracleon's Valentinian status, why would Origen remain dubious? Apelles is farther from him in time than Heracleon, and yet Origen has no hesitation in describing him accurately both as "Marcion's disciple" and as the author of his own heresy (*Cels.* 5.54). Furthermore, Origen attests that he knows something of the exegetical practices of Heracleon's disciples (*Comm. Jo.* 13.114; 13.122), indicating that Heracleon's cannot have been merely an unknown name from the past for him. And since Origen elsewhere speaks of Valentinians and a Valentinian school (see *Princ.* 2.9.5; *Cels.* 5.61; *Comm. Rom.* 8.11.2; *Hom. Luc.* 20.2; *Fr. Eph.*, commenting on Ephesians 4:5–7; *Fr. Prov.* 2.16), it is clear that he believes that a Valentinian tradition exists—a tradition to which, from Origen's point of view, Heracleon does not belong.

²² Praedestinatus (*Haer.* 16), Augustine (*Haer.* 16), and Epiphanius (*Pan.* 36) say the same.

²³ To choose but a few of the possible references: *Hom. Jos.* 10.2, 11.6, 12.3; *Hom. Lev.* 13.4.2; *Princ.* 2.9.5, 3.1.8; *Comm. Rom.* 1.19.6, 2.4.6, 2.13.27; *Comm. Jo.* 1.82, 1.253.

²⁴ See *Comm. Rom.* 8.8.7; *Hom. Luc.* 29.4; *Hom. Exod.* 3.2; *Hom. Jer.* 10.5.1; *Hom. Jos.* 7.7, 12.3.

■ Contrast with Celsus and Apelles

We have seen in the above that at no point does Origen refer to Heracleon as a Valentinian, although he does identify Heracleon as remaining outside the Church and as having his own followers. Origen's decision not to identify Heracleon as a Valentinian—to say nothing of his choice not to use this well-known designation against Heracleon—appears especially striking, when we consider a parallel case. In Origen's rebuttal of Celsus in the *Contra Celsum*, Origen repeatedly brings up Celsus's alleged Epicureanism and uses it polemically to undermine both Celsus's character and his arguments.²⁵

Despite Origen's dislike for the Valentinian school,²⁶ Ambrose's former attachment to it, and the fact that Origen considered Heracleon a heterodox teacher who stands outside the Church proper, Origen does not, in the present case, make rhetorical or argumentative use of Heracleon's ties to the Valentinian school. In fact, in addition to not capitalizing on Heracleon's alleged Valentinianism, Origen even goes so far as to downplay Heracleon's connection to Valentinianism at 2.100, as we discussed earlier.²⁷ One would find this lack of reference to Heracleon's Valentinianism extremely odd, if Origen did in fact consider Heracleon a Valentinian.²⁸

Another suggestive parallel occurs in Origen's treatment of Apelles, Marcion's successor. In this case Origen clearly indicates both Apelles's prior membership in Marcion's school and his subsequent establishment of his own teaching.²⁹

²⁵ *Cels.* 1.8; 1.10; 4.36; 4.54; 4.75; 5.3.

²⁶ See *Cels.* 6.36; *Hom. Luc.* 20.2.

²⁷ This difference is especially striking if one accepts Wucherpfennig's plausible argument that Origen intended his commentary to be taken primarily as a rebuttal of Heracleon (*Heracleon*, 20), thus increasing its similarity to *Contra Celsum*. Wucherpfennig further argues that in fact Origen is writing his commentary as an attack on the Valentinian teachings which so interested his patron Ambrose and possibly others of his circle, and that he is using Heracleon as the figurehead of this movement ("Für diese Auseinandersetzung hat Origenes sich Herakleon als Kontrahenten gewählt, da er ihm als γνώριμος τοῦ Οὐαλεντινίου bekannt war," [*Heracleon*, 25]). But this seems unlikely given the almost complete lack of references to Valentinianism, polemical or otherwise, in the work.

²⁸ Might Origen have deliberately minimized Heracleon's connections to Valentinus for the purposes of strengthening his (Origen's) case against him (Heracleon)? It seems unlikely. First of all, if this were the case, one would expect Origen to make some use of this separation somewhere in *Hom. Luc.*, especially at 2.100. Nowhere does he compare or contrast Heracleon with Valentinus. Furthermore, Origen would hardly gain any polemical benefit by separating Heracleon from Valentinus, one of his three arch-heretics (along with Basilides and Marcion). True, Tertullian did make polemical use of the fact that Valentinus's disciples seemed to have altered their master's system, but only after first identifying them, in a clear and definite way, as being followers of Valentinus. Origen neither argues for Heracleon's earlier association with Valentinus, nor exploits his alleged later distance from his teacher. He presents the whole issue in a decidedly understated and unargumentative manner. One could, perhaps, imagine Origen separating Heracleon from Valentinus in order to argue that, as bad as the latter is, the former is somehow even worse—but this tactic, again, would require a great deal of development and proof, and, furthermore, would be quite unlike Origen's general attitude towards the heretical leaders.

²⁹ *Cels.* 5.54; *Hom. Gen.* 2.2.

Again, this contrasts strikingly with Origen's treatment of Heracleon's links to Valentinianism.

■ No Assumption of a Valentinian System

We should mention a further intriguing point related to the lack of identification of Heracleon as a Valentinian. Although Origen repeatedly censures the allegedly arbitrary, inconsistent, or unsupported nature of Heracleon's exegeses, he does not adduce any sort of grand Valentinian system as the cause for this.³⁰ All his rebuttals are addressed to Heracleon personally. Origen does occasionally say that a given exegesis springs from Heracleon's belief in souls having fixed natures but never says or implies that Heracleon owes his exegeses to the influences of a specifically Valentinian system of beliefs or to the importation of such a belief system into his exegetical work. If a Heracleonian exegesis appears counterintuitive or paradoxical, Origen ascribes its unlikelihood to Heracleon alone.

This appears especially relevant at 2.103, where Origen has just announced (at 2.100) that some call Heracleon a Valentinian, and now he turns to criticize Heracleon's exegetical practice for its radical conclusions based on insufficient proofs. But even here, he makes no use of or reference to Heracleon's alleged Valentinian status. He assumes that Heracleon's interpretations spring from his own imagination, not from a Valentinian system of beliefs that he has inherited.

Origen's reticence in this regard becomes most apparent, when one compares it to the practices of modern commentators on this text, who frequently avail themselves of alleged parallels with Valentinian texts or beliefs to explain Heracleon's exegeses; Origen, by contrast, never does this. This appears especially significant given Origen's comments at 13.104. There, he dismisses some of Heracleon's interpretations as borrowed from an apocryphal work, the *Kerygmata Petrou*: "But it would take too long to cite here Heracleon's words taken (παραλαμβάνόμενα) from the writing called 'the Preaching of Peter.'" Origen evidently has the will and the ability to identify Heracleon's sources explicitly and to use this identification as a means of dismissing his arguments. If Origen considered Heracleon a Valentinian, surely he would have used the same strategy to rebut other interpretations.

On the other hand, at least one passage (2.155–156) in the *Commentary on John* shows where one can plausibly argue that Origen rebuts Valentinians.³¹ He writes (2.155) that he addresses himself to "those who have invented fables (μυθολογίαν)"³²

³⁰ For example, take his comments at 6.111 ("If he [Heracleon] brought even the least bit of persuasiveness to his defence of these doctrines, we would exert ourselves in refuting them: but a transcription without comment is sufficient for refutation") or 10.118.

³¹ There are other passages where Origen's comments could well be directed at Valentinians, but where it is also possibly that they are meant as a general refutation of all those who believe that souls can be of different natures. We have generally preferred to err on the side of caution, but Origen's reference here seems quite clearly to be targeting Valentinians.

³² Le Boulluc argues that in Origen's polemical writings, "fables" becomes "l'équivalent de 'doctrines des Valentiniens'" (*La notion d'hérésie*, 508).

concerning the Eons and their companions (συζυγίαις), and who imagine that the Word and Life were emitted by Mind and Truth.” But nothing links this passage to Heracleon. Origen does not rebut a Heracleonian exegesis here but rather comments in the midst of a long rumination on John 1:4. Furthermore, in referring to his opponents, Origen writes that, “it is probable that the more reasonable (among them), troubled in their researches and struck by our questions, will question us (ἀντερωτήσιν) as well.”³³ Note the use of the future tense. Origen anticipates these questions rather than responding to already existent exegeses, as he does with Heracleon.

■ Origen Does Not Consider Heracleon a Valentinian

In short, Origen never refers to Heracleon as a Valentinian, never explains Heracleon’s exegeses by reference to any possible Valentinian influence, and in the one section where there is clear evidence that Origen rebuts Valentinians, he makes no reference to Heracleon.

Considering the above, then, we have no reason not to accept a straightforward reading of 2.100 as reflecting Origen’s attitude vis-à-vis Heracleon, namely, that Origen himself does not consider Heracleon a Valentinian, but that he admits that others have linked the two figures. This point of view appears quite compatible with most of the ancient references to Heracleon with the significant exception of Clement of Alexandria. These other references associate Heracleon with Valentinus, especially in terms of showing him as a member of a series of teachers descending from Valentinus. But they do not directly and explicitly make him out to be a Valentinian, and, when carefully read, grudgingly admit the existence of considerable differences between his beliefs and those of Valentinus.

■ Origen Harmonized with Clement

We can harmonize Origen and the heresiological literature easily enough. But what are we to do with the contradiction between Origen’s point of view and that of Clement? Although one cannot say for certain, the difference in their opinions may well be the result of a difference in definition regarding what it means to belong to a given heterodox group.

As Le Boulluec has pointed out, Clement’s conceptual model when dealing with Christian sects, and especially with regard to naming them, involves the “assimilation complète des ‘hérésies’ aux écoles philosophiques.”³⁴ In *Strom.* 7.108.1–2,³⁵ Clement discusses the ways in which sectarian groups acquire their names. Some, such as the Docetists, acquire their names and definitions from the specific opinions

³³ Origen, *Comm. Jo.* 2.156.

³⁴ Le Boulluec, *La notion d’hérésie*, 264

³⁵ Alain Le Boulluec, *Clément d’Alexandrie, Les Stromates, Stromate VII* (SC 428; Paris: Cerf, 1997) 323–25.

they hold. Others acquire names after places, nationalities, characteristic activities, or—as in the case of the Valentinians—the name of their founder or master.

Thus to call someone a member of the Valentinian school does not, for Clement, necessarily involve the adoption of specific beliefs; rather, it indicates that this person belongs to the lineage of teaching descending from Valentinus. One becomes a Valentinian, because one learned from Valentinus or one of his successors, or because one associated with him, and not necessarily because of any given beliefs that one holds.³⁶ Clement's reference to Heracleon as a member of Valentinus's school, then, does not automatically tell us anything about Heracleon's doctrine or beliefs; it could simply indicate that he had Valentinus as his teacher or associate.³⁷ This would accord with the heresiological references as well.

The case appears differently, when one studies Origen. Le Boulluec argues persuasively that in Origen's writings the affiliation of a given piece of writing or teaching with a given heterodox school has very much to do with its content, including the doctrines that it presents or the belief system that it assumes.³⁸ Origen tends, in dealing with the great heretical "schools" of Marcion, Basilides, and Valentinus, to reduce each of them to one or two basic doctrinal ideas and focuses on these rather than on alleged chains of heretical succession.

This comes out quite clearly in the excerpt from Origen's commentary on Titus, preserved in Pamphilus and Eusebius's *Apology for Origen*. In setting out to describe a heretic, he refers exclusively to the realm of beliefs and ideas; a heretic denies the unity of the god of the Old Testament with the god of the New Testament, or the divine origin of the Law, or the virgin birth of the pre-existent Jesus, and so on. He defines sectarians by their adherence to the characteristic ideas of their sects.³⁹

Thus Origen defines Marcionism by its contempt for the creator god, the Basilidean school by the refusal of martyrdom and the belief in reincarnation, and Valentinianism by "l'aspect mythique de la théologie valentinienne,"⁴⁰ including the elaborate narratives detailing pleromatic existence, such as Irenaeus presented. The absence of these mythological features from Heracleon's work might well explain why Origen would not have considered it Valentinian, despite the fact (which he notes at 2.100) that others, perhaps those working with a more

³⁶ C. Wilfred Griggs argues, drawing on *Strom.* 3.5.41, that the real center of Clement's concern is with movements that encourage excessive behaviour, whether in a libertine or an ascetic direction. He notes that "the so-called heretics are designated by Clement primarily because of their non-ethical way of life (as determined by Clement), rather than by their doctrinal positions" (*Early Egyptian Christianity from its Origins to 451 C.E.* [Coptic Studies 2; Leiden: Brill, 1990] 100; see also 60).

³⁷ As Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, 264, points out, citing its similarities with Diogenes Laertius's work, Clement's attitude follows the traditional genre of *περὶ αἰρέσεων* writings.

³⁸ Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, 508; see also 441, where Le Boulluec argues that, unlike Clement, Origen "n'exploite pas l'argument . . . des 'successions'."

³⁹ See *Apologie pour Origène* (ed. and trans. René Amacker and Éric Junod; vol. 1; SC 464; Paris: Cerf, 2002) 81.

⁴⁰ Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, 508.

Clementine concept of the use of genealogical standards for determining affiliation, do consider him a Valentinian.

We should note here that Origen's understanding of Valentinianism coheres much more closely with modern scholarly understandings than does Clement's. Modern discussions of Valentinianism almost always focus on elaborate mythical systems, such as one finds exposed in Irenaeus, which detail aeonic emanation and the fall from pleromatic harmony into the world of multiplicity.⁴¹ This holds especially true with regard to analysis of the Nag Hammadi corpus, our most significant new source of Valentinian writings. These texts give no information as to their authors' identities or affiliations, and thus the only way to identify which of them to consider Valentinian, and which not, involves examining them in accordance with doctrinal, theological, or mythological definitions of Valentinianism. Origen's assessment, then, has direct ramifications for the modern study of Heracleon and Valentinianism.

■ Conclusion Regarding Heracleon

We can therefore bring together all the ancient references to Heracleon by assuming that he lived contemporaneously with Valentinus, knew him as an associate or a student, and that although he worked alongside or under the shadow of his more (in)famous colleague, he nonetheless developed his own theological and philosophical views, views which one might not consider Valentinian by modern scholarly standards. If this scenario proves correct, it would explain why Clement would see him as a Valentinian, why Origen would not, and why the other ancient authorities would tentatively present him as linked to Valentinus.

This hypothesis is not radical, and does not go tremendously further than earlier analyses by Blanc, Devoti, de Faye, or Quispel.⁴² It also accords well with the recent work of Wuchterpfennig, who suggests that Valentinus and Heracleon had headed in similar directions, exploring similar terrain, but doing so with some degree of independence.⁴³

⁴¹ Perhaps the best recent attempt—certainly among the most sensible—to define Valentinianism is that of Einar Thomassen (“Notes pour la délimitation d’un corpus valentinien à Nag Hammadi,” in *Les textes de Nag Hammadi et le problème de leur classification: Actes du Colloque tenu à Québec du 15 au 19 septembre 1993* [ed. Louis Painchaud and Anne Pasquier; Québec: Les Presses de l’Université Laval, 1995] 243–59). In his attempt to establish a corpus of Valentinian works among the Nag Hammadi writings, he very wisely tailors his criteria to fit in with his source material. His focus is always specifically on the Nag Hammadi texts as he constructs a set of heuristic criteria that allow him to determine which ones are to be excluded from, and which included in, the category of Valentinian writings.

⁴² See above, n. 1.

⁴³ Wuchterpfennig, *Heracleon*, 367, 371.

Ramifications of This Conclusion

This conclusion has significant ramifications for our understanding of Heracleon and Valentinianism generally. The lack of characteristically Valentinian mythological features in Heracleon's commentary has presented a noted and persistent problem for modern readers, and it seems that this appeared problematic for Origen as well. On the one hand, by Origen's day Heracleon had already acquired the reputation of an associate or student of Valentinus, as we see from Origen's comment and the references to Heracleon in Clement and Irenaeus. On the other hand, his commentary did not possess the distinctive characteristics that Origen associated with Valentinianism. Origen's resolution to this dilemma, it seems, lay in noting but not supporting Heracleon's alleged Valentinianism.

This dilemma has plagued modern scholarship as well. Certainly one could assimilate many aspects of Heracleon's commentary to a Valentinian system, but then, one could say this of the apostle Paul's letters as well, as many Valentinians did. We have no unambiguous evidence that would permit us to assert that Heracleon's system represents a Valentinian one in the sense of presenting or assuming a distinctively Valentinian mythological and theological worldview.

In attempting to explain this, some scholars have argued that Heracleon wrote his commentary as an exoteric work, and that in it he hides these features so as to make his beliefs appear more Christian. As Elaine Pagels writes, "this discrepancy [between the supposed Valentinian system and the fragments of Heracleon] offers a clear example of how a Valentinian theologian could present a clear, consistent and intentionally exoteric or publicly oriented exposition of his theology for non-initiates . . . while reserving his esoteric theology . . . for initiates."⁴⁴ Or, in Kaestli's words, "Notre conclusion sera donc qu'Héracléon n'a ni ignoré, ni éliminé le mythe des éons et de Sagesse, mais qu'il l'a délibérément laissé de côté parce que son commentaire s'adressait à un public pas encore initié à toutes les dimensions du mythe."⁴⁵

For reasons of literary genre alone this explanation seems unlikely. Wucherpennig has recently examined the generic significance of Origen's description of Heracleon's work as ὑπομνήματα. Looking at the understanding of, and expectations for, this genre of literature in antiquity, Wucherpennig writes that "diese Hypomnemata-Literatur beschäftigte sich mit der Überlieferung und Erklärung literarischer Werke und würde heute der Literaturwissenschaft zugerechnet," and argues that certain schools would have published and circulated it for the benefit of students. "Als solche war sie wohl nicht eigentlich für die Öffentlichkeit bestimmt, sondern primär für eine schulinterne Verwendung."⁴⁶ Thus the genre of the work

⁴⁴ Elaine Pagels, *The Johannine Gospel in Gnostic Exegesis: Heracleon's Commentary on John* (SBLMS 17; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1973) 18.

⁴⁵ "L'exégèse valentinienne," 350.

⁴⁶ Wucherpennig, *Heracleon*, 34. See also Pfeiffer, *History*, 29, who writes that this sort of literature "never meant an independent, finished writing; it may refer to notes reminding one of

as identified by Origen would argue against the idea that Heracleon had intended it for exoteric use.

But going beyond this specific objection to a specific issue, we must note that Origen, faced with the same puzzling situation as modern scholars, did not choose to resolve it in such a way. Now, Origen grew up in Alexandria towards the end of the second century and debated with Valentinians, read their works, and had as his patron the ex-Valentinian Ambrose. In short, Origen knew about Valentinians and their writings, and he knew as well that some considered Heracleon a Valentinian. Yet he gives no sign whatsoever that he considered Heracleon's commentary an exoteric work concealing and simultaneously depending on a classically Valentinian mythological system. This argues strongly against the "exoteric" hypothesis of Pagels and Kaestli. It suggests instead that, while Heracleon qualifies as a Valentinian by Clement's genealogical definition, he does not qualify as such by the more doctrinal and systematic standards that Origen uses. We have no justification, therefore, to proceed from Clement's assertion to the assumption that some grand theological or mythological schema must underlie Heracleon's exegeses.

The foregoing discussion of Heracleon's alleged Valentinianism has also made apparent the importance of definitional clarity. We have seen how the apparent contradictions between Origen and Clement's reports disappeared when we took into account their different ideas of a Valentinian. Before one can evaluate reports that a person "is" something — whether a Valentinian, or a gnostic, or even a Christian — one must clarify what "being" that thing actually means. Such a consensus, we have seen, did not exist in the ancient world, and neither does it exist in the modern world.

In an era when the gnostics are no longer gnostics, and when research has shown that Valentinus himself probably did not hold many of the beliefs thought characteristic of Valentinianism, the time appears ripe for a new debate over what, if anything, we want "Valentinianism" to mean. But until such a debate gets under way, the patristic evidence suggests that we must exercise caution in calling Heracleon a Valentinian, and even more caution in letting his alleged affiliation condition how we read his writings.

facts heard or seen in the past, or to notes jotted down and collected as rough copy for a future book, or to explanatory notes to some other writing, that is, a commentary," and Raffaella Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (ASP 26; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1996) 53–55.

Factualizing the Folklore: Stephen Carlson's Case against Morton Smith*

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Stephen C. Carlson's *The Gospel Hoax* sets out to validate the long-standing suspicion that Professor Morton Smith, late of Columbia University, forged his famous discovery of a letter of Clement of Alexandria, which quotes from a longer ("secret") Gospel of Mark.¹ This academic folklore has been passed on like an esoteric tradition since 1975, when Quentin Quesnell called on Smith to make the manuscript of this letter available for forensic testing in order to rule out the possibility of a recent hoax. Quesnell had difficulty substantiating his concerns. In his article in the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, he postulated that a modern scholar might have devised the letter as "a controlled experiment" in order to examine how scholars react to new evidence. Yet the manuscript of this letter, which Smith found in 1958, was inscribed on the last pages of a seventeenth-century book that purportedly was kept in a locked room of a monastery in the Judean desert. What modern forger would leave his creation there and gamble that someone would discover it in his lifetime? For this scenario to seem at all plausible, Quesnell needed to imply what he personally suspected, namely, that Smith forged it himself for this purpose. Accordingly, Quesnell described his hypothetical modern "mystifier" as someone who shared Smith's abilities, opportunities, resources, and interest in what people make of the document.²

Smith's incensed reply to Quesnell's article appeared the following year in the same journal. He found Quesnell's hypothesis of a modern mystifier completely

* My thanks go to Allan Pantuck and Birger A. Pearson for their helpful suggestions.

¹ Stephen C. Carlson, *The Gospel Hoax: Morton Smith's Invention of Secret Mark* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2005). Smith translated the word μυστικός as "secret" rather than "mystic." Neither is satisfactory, so I use his alternative designation "the longer Gospel of Mark." All biblical quotations are from the RSV.

² Quentin Quesnell, "The Mar Saba Clementine: A Question of Evidence," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* [CBQ] 37 (1975) 48–67, at 55, 58.

implausible and objected to Quesnell's insinuations.³ Smith did not own the manuscripts that he had catalogued and photographed at Mar Saba, so one could hardly fault him for not making this one available to other scholars. Nevertheless, as the years passed, many people who had witnessed this exchange began to wonder why no one besides Smith ever claimed to have seen the document. Some privately doubted Smith's report that he left it "in the top room of the tower library," unaware that three Western scholars had in fact located it there in 1976 but failed in their attempt to arrange for its testing.⁴ Few took note of Thomas Talley's report in 1981 that the book into which the manuscript had been copied was now in the patriarchal library in Jerusalem, in part because Talley had not seen the actual manuscript, which a librarian, Kallistos Dourvas, had removed for photographing around the time of the book's transfer from Mar Saba in 1976. The present librarians claim that they cannot find it.⁵

Unconstrained by physical evidence and legal consequences, the folklore of forgery entered the secondary literature shortly after Smith's death in 1991, when Jacob Neusner set out to demolish Smith's reputation in retaliation for Smith's public denunciation of his error-ridden scholarship at the SBL meeting in 1984. Dubbing Smith's discovery "the forgery of the century," Neusner asserted that Smith created the "secret" gospel to prove that Jesus was a homosexual.⁶ A few writers have recently promoted variants of this scenario, some subscribing to the Gay Gospel Hypothesis, others, to the notion that Smith produced the document as a joke or for the satisfaction of duping everyone.⁷ What these imaginative allegations

³ Morton Smith, "On the Authenticity of the Mar Saba Letter of Clement," *CBQ* 38 (1976) 196–99.

⁴ Smith's report is cited in Quesnell, "Question of Evidence," 49 n. 4; idem, "A Reply to Morton Smith," *CBQ* 38 (1976) 200; and Smith, "Authenticity," 196. The three Western scholars who located the manuscript and brought it to Jerusalem are Guy Stroumsa, David Flusser, and Shlomo Pines. See Guy G. Stroumsa, "Comments on Charles Hedrick's Article: A Testimony," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 11 (2003) 147–53.

⁵ Thomas J. Talley, "Liturgical Time in the Ancient Church: The State of Research," *Studia Liturgica* 14 (1982) 34–51, at 45; trans. of "Le Temps Liturgique dans l'Église ancienne," *La Maison-Dieu* 147 (1981) 29–60. On the issue of the manuscript's present location, see Charles W. Hedrick and Nikolaos Olympiou, "Secret Mark: New Photographs, New Witnesses," *The Fourth R* 13 (2000) 3–11, 14–16; John Dart, *Decoding Mark* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2003) 137–40.

⁶ Jacob Neusner, *Are There Really Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospels? A Refutation of Morton Smith* (South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism 80; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993) 27–31, at 28; this was republished several times. For a fuller overview of the controversy sparked by Quesnell, see Scott G. Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel: Rethinking Morton Smith's Controversial Discovery* (Studies in Christianity and Judaism 15; Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005) 34–48.

⁷ Donald Harman Akenson, *Saint Saul: A Skeleton Key to the Historical Jesus* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 85–89; Bart D. Ehrman, "The Forgery of an Ancient Discovery? Morton Smith and the Secret Gospel of Mark," in his *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003) 67–89; Robert M. Price, "Second Thoughts on the Secret Gospel," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 14 (2004) 127–32.

have lacked, strangely enough, is proof that the document is a modern forgery and evidence tying the alleged crime to Smith. That, however, is the promise of Baylor University Press's latest "scholarly bombshell."⁸ In *The Gospel Hoax*, Carlson endeavors to prove three things: that the document is a forgery; that Smith had the ability, opportunity, and motive to create this document; and that Smith forged it himself as a hoax, leaving intentional and unintentional clues to his prank. I have addressed the issues of motive and ability elsewhere.⁹ The present paper is limited to examining the third aspect of Carlson's case, his circumstantial evidence connecting the document to Morton Smith.

Carlson offers five items into evidence, so to speak. First, he claims to have uncovered another manuscript from Mar Saba in the same handwriting as Clement's letter "to Theodore" (hereafter *Letter to Theodore*) and that Smith intentionally assigned this second manuscript to a fictitious contemporary who "bears an uncanny resemblance to Morton Smith himself."¹⁰ Second, Carlson reinforces this claim with the contention that the eighteenth-century handwriting of the manuscript contains four anomalous letterforms that accord with Smith's own Greek handwriting. Third, Carlson argues that Smith deliberately "salted" the document with clues to his identity,¹¹ including an anachronistic allusion to an invention by the *Morton Salt* company in the letter's expression "even the salt loses its savor." Fourth, he contends that this clue is complemented by a concealed reference to the word *smith* in Smith's exposition on this expression. Fifth, Carlson argues that the letter's first quotation from the longer Gospel of Mark, in which Jesus teaches a young man "the mystery of the kingdom of God" (as in Mark 4:11), anachronistically depicts a homosexual relationship between persons of equal status. This equation of the mystery of the kingdom of God with a forbidden sexual relationship within a letter of Clement that exhorts secrecy constitutes Smith's own seal of authorship, since he had already linked these elements together in his scholarship prior to his discovery of the manuscript.

This a priori case sounds impressive. How well does it stand up to scrutiny?

■ Exhibit One: The Writing of M. Madiotes

Argument: Carlson's first argument concerns the manuscript that Smith catalogued as item number 22 during his stay at Mar Saba in 1958. A reproduction of the first page (recto) of this manuscript appears in both *The Secret Gospel* and the journal

⁸ The quoted words are from Larry W. Hurtado's endorsement on the back cover.

⁹ On motive, see Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*, 49–54; idem, "The Question of Motive in the Case against Morton Smith," *JBL* 125 (2006) 351–83. With respect to ability, Carlson conveniently ignored the problem, demonstrated in chapters 4–8 of *Mark's Other Gospel*, that Smith's comprehension of the *Letter to Theodore* and of its gospel excerpts was far too inadequate for him to be the author.

¹⁰ Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 43.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, xviii, 85.

Archaeology as an illustration of how monks sometimes pasted together loose pages of old manuscripts in order to fortify the bindings of books.¹² This page contains personal notes written by several different individuals. The names of some of these men appear in Smith's published catalogue of Mar Saba's manuscripts.¹³ According to Carlson, the uppermost handwriting (see figure 1) is the same as that of MS 65, the one containing Clement's *Letter to Theodore*, yet Smith attributed this eighteenth-century hand to a twentieth-century individual named "M. Madiotes" (Μ. Μαδιότης), whose surname must be fictitious because it does not appear in the online Greek phonebook.¹⁴

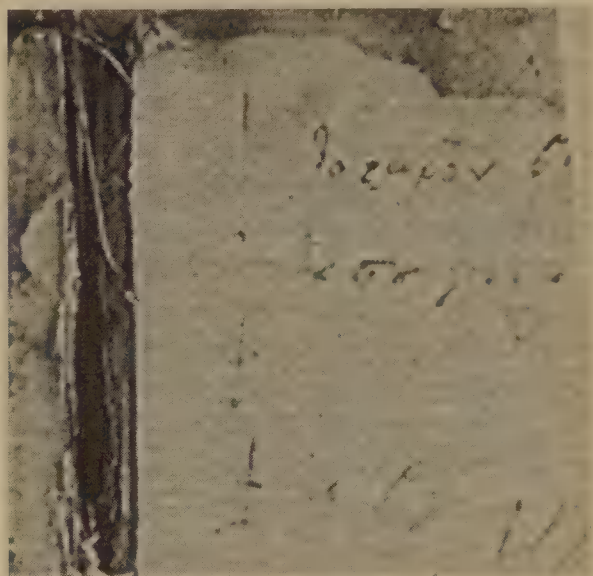


Figure 1 The top hand of the first page (recto) of MS 22.

This odd attribution is a deliberate clue. The name Madiotes is a pseudonym meaning "baldy" and "swindler," derived from the verb μαδάω. A balding Morton Smith invented Madiotes, added his handwriting to MS 22, assigned this hand to the twentieth century, and included a picture featuring this writing in both *Archaeology*

¹² Morton Smith, *The Secret Gospel: The Discovery and Interpretation of the Secret Gospel According to Mark* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973; repr., Clearlake, Calif.: Dawn Horse, 1982) 37 (rev. ed.; Middletown, Calif.: Dawn Horse, 2005) 35; idem, "Monasteries and Their Manuscripts," *Archaeology* 13 (1960) 177.

¹³ Morton Smith, "Ελληνικά χειρόγραφα ἐν τῇ Μονῇ τοῦ ἁγίου Σάββα" (trans. Archimandrite Constantine Michaelides), *Νέα Σιών* 52 (1960) 110–25, 245–56, at 119–20.

¹⁴ Figure 1 is derived from the 1984 reprint of the 1982 Dawn Horse Press edition of Smith, *Secret Gospel*. This reproduction of Smith's photograph of MS 22 reveals a few more letters than the 1973 Harper & Row edition, which is cropped at the right edge of the *omicron* in *παρον*, thus showing most of the incorrect circumflex accent but none of the *nu* or the *beta*. The 1960 reproduction in *Archaeology* is cropped slightly past the beginning of the *omicron*, thus mostly concealing the circumflex accent. Carlson's reproduction (his figure 5) is cropped in the same place.

and *The Secret Gospel* as a clue that he was swindling people with a twentieth-century forgery.¹⁵ This argument is represented graphically on the cover of *The Gospel Hoax*, which uses a colorized rendering of Smith's photograph of MS 22 with a magnifying glass superimposed to tell the publisher's story of how a "master sleuth" found this clue to Smith's hoax by poring over a forgotten manuscript.¹⁶ Although this novelesque image suggests a visit to Mar Saba, Carlson actually inspected the published photograph and not the manuscript itself.

Assessment: The possibility that a twentieth-century individual wrote the *Letter to Theodore* using an eighteenth-century hand would be damning evidence of forgery, so I examined this claim in detail when the editors of *The Expository Times* invited Carlson and me to reply to each other's books on longer Mark.¹⁷ Here I shall summarize the two main points that I made in that paper. First, the top handwriting on the first page of MS 22 is too limited to permit a positive identification of its author. In order to eliminate the possibility of two different writers, one must have writing samples that are extensive enough to exhibit several instances of most (preferably all) letters of the alphabet and the ligatures that each writer uses, for the examiner needs to determine whether these letterforms are rendered the same way in both the questioned writing (here MS 22) and the known samples (here only MS 65), whether these letterforms display the same range of natural variation (discussed under "Exhibit Two"), and whether the questioned and known specimens demonstrate the same habits in the way that they connect, or do not connect, the various letter combinations. Second, even though the small sample does not permit a positive conclusion of one writer, it nevertheless allows this conclusion to be refuted, for as experts in handwriting identification insist, "Repeated small differences establish clearly that two specimens are the work of two individuals despite a great number of general similarities."¹⁸ We cannot always talk about *repeated* differences in the case of the top handwriting in MS 22, because the specimen is so limited. But since the four distinct words and five isolated letters visible in the published photograph differ from the writing of the *Letter to Theodore* in over a dozen respects, these differences cannot all constitute aberrations. Here I shall discuss the most significant differences. For convenience, I shall use "MS 22" hereafter to refer to the top hand on the first page (recto) in Smith's photograph.

¹⁵ Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 42–44. The verb *to swindle* implies defrauding people of their money, which, as Carlson notes, is not the objective of a hoax (15–16). So this supposed meaning of Madiotes is inconsistent with Carlson's hoax hypothesis.

¹⁶ The quoted words are from Mark Goodacre's endorsement on the back cover.

¹⁷ Scott G. Brown, "Reply to Stephen Carlson," *Expository Times* 117 (2006) 144–49. This paper includes a discussion of the general principles of handwriting identification.

¹⁸ Ordway Hilton, *Scientific Examination of Questioned Documents* (rev. ed.; CRC Series in Forensic and Police Science; Boca Raton, Fla.: CRC, 1993) 161.

The top line of figure 2 compares the form of the definite article $\tau\acute{o}$ in MS 22 with the first twelve instances of $\tau\acute{o}$ in MS 65.¹⁹ For this word, both writers use the taller, rounded form of *tau*, but the similarities end there. In MS 65, the initial stroke quickly curves upward to the right, causing the whole letter to slant in this direction, and the base of the stem curves in order to connect with the *omicron*. This combining of *tau* with a following *omicron* holds true for all sixty-four instances of $\tau\acute{o}$ (with or without an accent) in the letter but not for the example of $\tau\acute{o}$ in MS 22.

The second line compares the first three letters of the word $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{o}\nu$ in MS 22 with all seven places in MS 65 where these three letters occur together. Two differences readily appear here. First, although both writers use an unusual form of cursive *pi* (i.e., $\overline{\pi}$, $\overline{\rho}$), the latter writes it differently when it precedes *alpha*. In these cases, rather than connecting to the next letter at the baseline, the stroke loops backward over the top of the *pi* in order to form the horizontal bar before continuing to the next letter. This form of cursive *pi* also occurs before *epsilon*, *eta* (without an accent), *lambda*, *nu*, *rho*, *tau*, and a space. The form used in MS 22 does appear in MS 65, but only before *eta* (with acute accent), *iota*, *omega*, and the *omicron-upsilon* ligature ($\overline{\rho}$). In the 112 instances of *pi*, no exceptions to these habits occur. Second, when *alpha* precedes *rho* in MS 65, the letters are connected, and the top of the *rho* is shaped like a loop. The first hand in MS 22 did not connect these letters, and the top of his *rho* is circular.

The third line of figure 2 compares the way both documents combine *rho* with *omicron*. Again, the unconnected form of *rho* used in MS 22 does appear in the *Letter to Theodore* (examples occur under $\pi\alpha\rho$ in figure 2), but only before certain letters: *gamma*, *theta*, *kappa*, *nu*, *pi*, *tau*, *chi*, a space, and, occasionally, *alpha*, *epsilon*, *eta*, and *omega*. It never appears before an *omicron*. Instead, in these twenty-five instances, the tail of the *rho* always curves up to the right to connect with the *omicron* (a common ligature). The fourth line illustrates the shape and position of circumflex accents in both writings. Those in MS 65 are wavy (tilde), and the start of the stroke is normally aligned vertically with the left edge or the center of a wide vowel, but the stroke often continues past the right edge. The circumflex accent visible in the published photograph of MS 22 is straight, and the stroke begins before the left edge of the vowel and ends nearly in line with the right edge. Lines five and six compare the individual letters *beta* and *gamma*. Unlike the *beta* in MS 22, the upper loops of the fourteen *betas* in MS 65 vertically overlap the bottom loops, which are not tight against the “back” of the letter, as they are in MS 22. The downward stroke of the *gammas* in MS 65 is noticeably straight, resulting in a letter that resembles an elongated *v*, unlike the downward stroke of the *gammas* in MS 22, which bends sharply to the left, resulting in a letter that resembles a *y*. These side-by-side comparisons demonstrate how very different these two writings are.

¹⁹ The images of MS 65 in this article were scanned from the color photographs taken by Kalistos Dourvas (courtesy of Charles W. Hedrick).

Of equal significance is the lack of accents in MS 22 on the words το, του, and σου and the incorrect accent on παρον.²⁰ The *omicrons* in the words το παρον (meaning “the present,” or simply “this”) should both have grave accents. If του represents the definite article, then του and σου should have circumflex accents. If instead του represents the last three letters of the last word on the previous line, accents might not be required. Whatever the case, any competent scribe would have put an accent over το, and no competent scribe would have put a circumflex accent over a short vowel. As William Wallace put it, “A short vowel circumflexed is, like metal on metal or colour on colour in heraldry, *pour enquérir*.”²¹ This writer’s problem with accents strongly indicates that he was not only a different individual but also a considerably less competent scribe than the one who penned MS 65, whose use of accents was excellent.²²

Carlson has simply mistaken two different writers for one. On its own, this conclusion eliminates his basis both for treating the photograph of MS 22 as a deliberate clue and for attributing MS 65 to a twentieth-century individual who “uncannily resembles Smith himself.”²³ This case of mistaken identity does not end here, however. When some bureaucratic issues get resolved, Allan Pantuck intends to publish two documents that demonstrate that Carlson misattributed the top handwriting to M. Madiotes.

■ Exhibit Two: Anomalous Letterforms Attributable to Smith

Argument: Carlson turns to paleography for additional circumstantial evidence, arguing that MS 65 contains four paleographical anomalies that agree with Smith’s Greek handwriting. These anomalies are established by comparing MS 65 with a few manuscripts written at Mar Saba in the eighteenth century, whereas Smith’s writing habits are established from annotations that he wrote in the margins of books that he owned (the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City now houses his personal library). Carlson notes that the writer of MS 65 joined the left “leg” of his *lambdas* near to the bottom of the right leg and that he formed some of his *lambdas* in only one stroke. Smith also wrote *lambdas* in both ways. Carlson also notes that both Smith and the writer of MS 65 used a one-stroke short *tau*, where the horizontal line curves back and then turns down at the midpoint. And Carlson notes that the *thetas* in MS 65 appear “very similar” to the *thetas* that appear in Smith’s marginal annotations, “including a leading horizontal stroke at midline.”²⁴

²⁰ The words του and σου on the second line of figure 1 use a ligature to represent *omicron* and *upsilon* (ϝ).

²¹ William Wallace, “An Index of Greek Ligatures and Contractions,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 43 (1923) 184.

²² See Morton Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973) 2.

²³ Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 47.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 46–47.

Assessment: Four fundamental problems in Carlson's approach undermine his paleographical argument. First, his determination of anomalous letterforms presumes that authentic manuscripts written at Mar Saba in the eighteenth century should share the same traits. That premise is erroneous. After the twelfth century, Greek handwriting became less standardized and more individualistic, with the result that we can more easily identify individual scribes. By the fifteenth century, "the varieties of style are numerous and overlapping, and there is no clear distinction between styles thought suitable for copying Biblical and patristic texts and those for secular manuscripts; still less are there any differences according to where in the by-now-shrunken Byzantine empire a manuscript was written."²⁵ So we should not expect manuscripts written in Mar Saba in the eighteenth century to share all the same stylistic traits. Indeed, they do not: at least seven differences in letterforms appear in the undisputed samples displayed in figures 2 and 7 of Carlson's book.²⁶ Moreover, as Aristarchos Peristeris noted, Mar Saba was from its inception "a monastery for more advanced and experienced monks." Consequently, "a considerable number of monks were already highly educated when they joined the monastery."²⁷ That was particularly true of the scribes, many if not most of whom developed their writing styles elsewhere prior to their stay at the monastery. Smith himself believed that the person who penned ms 65 was a Phanariot scholar who "had been trained in the Patriarchal Academy in Constantinople."²⁸ Why exclude that possibility? Finally, although it makes perfect sense that a manuscript containing a letter of Clement would be produced at Mar Saba, where a large collection of Clement's letters once existed, we cannot know for sure whether the manuscript was penned before or after the book came to Mar Saba, as Smith himself observed.²⁹ Thus, Carlson's position that ms 65 is anomalous wherever it differs from undisputed Mar Saba manuscripts of the same period (and accords with Smith's handwriting) is based on false or arbitrary premises. This fact eliminates his reason for treating the four alleged similarities as significant and suspicious.

Second, Carlson's neglect of the phenomenon of natural variation in handwriting renders his handwriting comparison dubious. People are not machines, so they

²⁵ Ruth Barbour, *Greek Literary Hands A.D. 400–1600* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981) xxii, xxiii.

²⁶ All three comparison manuscripts in Carlson's figure 2 render *pi* differently. Figures 2b and 2c render *epsilon* differently than 2a. Figures 2a and 2c render *gamma*, *theta*, initial *kappa*, and terminal *sigma* differently from each other (those letters are not displayed in 2b). And *six* different forms of *theta* appear in figure 7. These differences among the eighteenth-century writers of Mar Saba could easily have been multiplied had Carlson offered more than four lines of text from three Mar Saba manuscripts as samples. It is highly tendentious to label commonplace differences anomalous only when they occur in ms 65 and agree with Smith's handwriting.

²⁷ Aristarchos Peristeris, "Literary and Scribal Activities at the Monastery of St. Sabas," in *The Sabaite Heritage in the Orthodox Church from the Fifth Century to the Present* (ed. Joseph Patrich; Leuven: Peeters, 2001) 171.

²⁸ Smith, *Clement*, 2–3.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 285–90.

never write a letter exactly the same way twice.³⁰ Naturally, the variations in the way writers render letters have limits. One can establish this range of variation for a particular individual only by examining numerous instances of the way he or she writes individual letters, preferably from a variety of writing samples.³¹ Only then can one make generalizations about a writer's habits and abstract a "master pattern" for any letter, a description of its typical shape. Thus, as a preliminary to handwriting comparison, practitioners often produce tables displaying numerous instances of particular letters as they appear in writing samples by the suspect and in the questioned document, as I did in figures 2–5. Carlson's own table (his figure 7) defeats the purpose of this procedure, for it compares two select examples of Smith's rendering of three Greek letters against two select examples from MS 65 and either one, two, or three select examples from seven eighteenth-century manuscripts from Mar Saba. By offering a few selective examples, he creates the impression that Smith's ways of writing the letters *lambda*, *tau*, and *theta* resemble the habits of the writer of the letter and differ from the "authentic" manuscripts without having established how these writers typically form these letters. In order to correct this problem, we need to examine a larger and more representative selection of these letters from Smith's Greek handwriting and MS 65 before generalizing about similarities and differences.

Third, Carlson's premise that a modern forger would "lapse" into his or her own writing habits when forging an eighteenth-century manuscript disregards an important distinction between publicly and privately executed forgeries.³² Forgers are most likely to lapse into their own habits when they are obliged to work in public before witnesses and therefore do not have an exemplar present from which to copy. Hence document examiners can reasonably expect to find some of a suspect's writing traits in, for example, signatures forged in front of bank tellers or court-ordered writing samples produced by someone who is trying to disguise his or her writing. In such cases, forgers of necessity fall back on their own habits to supplement their imperfect *memory* of the writing they are attempting to simulate. The lapses, moreover, are not limited to a few features of a few letters but extend to many aspects of the forgers' writing habits, precisely because the forgers are relying completely on memory.³³ If the *Letter to Theodore* is a modern forgery of an eighteenth-century hand, the forger would not have produced it in public and naturally would have copied from exemplars, since the amount of information he or

³⁰ See, for example, Wilson R. Harrison, *Suspect Documents: Their Scientific Examination* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1981) 297–305; Hilton, *Questioned Documents*, 158–60.

³¹ On the question of quantity of samples, see Roy A. Huber and A. M. Headrick, *Handwriting Identification: Facts and Fundamentals* (Boca Raton, Fla.: CRC, 1999) 249–50.

³² Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 46.

³³ James V. P. Conway, *Evidential Documents* (Police Science Series; Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1959) 24–27.

she would have to retain in memory in order to imitate so many foreign letterforms and habits of connection without the aid of exemplars would be astronomical. With the aid of exemplars, a forger might occasionally lapse into his or her usual writing habits at times of waning concentration, in which case both the simulated letterform and the forger's own way of writing that letterform would appear,³⁴ with the latter occurring "progressively at various points" in the document.³⁵ The only times a forger might *consistently* substitute his or her usual habits while privately drawing the letterforms in exemplars are when those forms are too subtle to discern or too complicated to replicate. Thus, we should entertain the premise of Smith lapsing into his own habits only if the alleged similarities, like true lapses, occur "progressively at various points" in the manuscript or else involve very subtle or complex features.

Fourth, Carlson never addresses the question of whether the similarities he adduced between Smith's writing and MS 65 are probative. The handwriting of any two individuals using the same alphabet should contain similarities, including some striking ones. How do we know that these four alleged similarities are not simply coincidental? Ordway Hilton discussed this issue in connection with forged signatures:

Identification of the forger by means of his writing alone is the exception rather than the rule. Seldom do enough of the forger's own writing habits remain to serve as the basis for an identification. In rather rare instances, however, the forger may be identified by a number of his small but highly individual habits that occur in the simulated signature. Nevertheless, it must be understood that positive proof of his identity can never be based upon merely one or two similarities between his and the disputed writing.³⁶

When dealing with the possibility of a simulated forgery, then, the discovery of "a number of [the suspect's] small but highly individual habits" can at best constitute evidence supporting the identification, but only if these habits are "highly individual," which is to say, quite unlikely to occur in the writings of most other individuals. Accordingly, the only similarities between Smith's Greek handwriting and MS 65 that might be probative are the ones that are highly unusual, both for the eighteenth century and the twentieth.

From the preceding theoretical considerations we may distill four criteria that every alleged paleographical similarity must meet in order to have value as evidence against Smith. The letterforms in question must 1) represent Smith's normal ways of writing those letters; 2) be "highly individual" in relation to twentieth-century

³⁴ David Ellen, *Scientific Examination of Documents: Methods and Techniques* (Boca Raton, Fla.: CRC Press, 2006) 50.

³⁵ Conway, *Evidential Documents*, 27. He was describing publicly executed forgeries, but the same pattern should apply to lapses that result from mental fatigue.

³⁶ Hilton, *Questioned Documents*, 200.

Greek writing; 3) be equally unusual for the eighteenth century; and 4) make sense as lapses or deliberate substitutions. Put differently, if these letterforms are easy to reproduce or appear consistently in MS 65, then the similarity to Smith's writing is probably coincidental. If they are normal for the eighteenth century, then there is no basis for treating them as suspicious. If they are commonplace in twentieth-century Greek handwriting, then there is no basis for ascribing them specifically to Smith. And if Smith normally wrote these letterforms in a different way, then Carlson's examples of Smith's Greek handwriting are unrepresentative, and there is no way to explain why forms that are atypical for Smith's writing would appear with any regularity in MS 65.

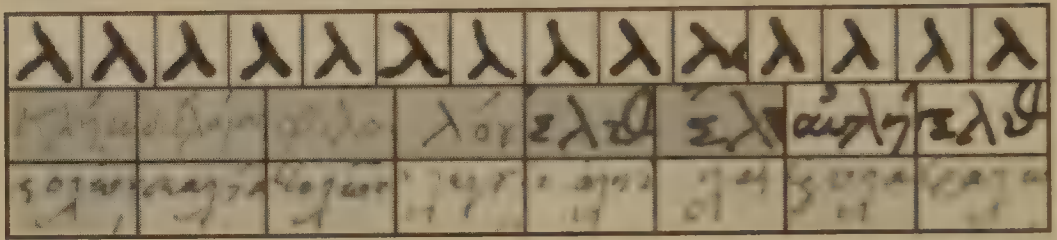


Figure 3 Smith's two-stroke lambda compared with MS 65.

We begin our reassessment of Carlson's paleographical evidence with the two-stroke *lambda*. The top line of figure 3 reproduces the first fourteen *lambdas* in Smith's book *Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospels*, where he added the Greek text by hand. The *lambdas* in the second line come from annotations in Smith's books and a letter he wrote in 1955. The third line, as best as I can determine using photographs, reproduces eight two-stroke *lambdas* from MS 65.³⁷ This figure readily illustrates the wide variation in the way Smith wrote this letterform. Note in particular the variations in the height of the left leg. We can quantify the range of this variation using the large sample of Greek writing in *Tannaitic Parallels*. There, 55 percent of the *lambdas* have a low left leg, 35 percent are formed with the left leg intersecting the middle of the right leg, and 10 percent intersect above

³⁷ First row: Morton Smith, *Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospels* (Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series [JBLMS] 6; Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1951). Second row: images one through four are from Smith's copy of *Clemens Alexandrinus* (ed. Otto Stählin; Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte, Band [12], 15, 17, 39; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1905–1936) 1:xvi; 4:318 (courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary; call number BR60.G7C6 1905 in the Morton Smith collection); images five and six are from Smith, letter to Erwin R. Goodenough, 3 January 1955, Goodenough Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library (courtesy of Allan Pantuck). Images seven and eight are from my photocopy of notes Smith wrote on the verso of the half-title page (ii) of his copy of Alv Kragerud, *Der Lieblingsjünger im Johannevangelium. Ein exegetischer Versuch* (Oslo: Osloer Universitätsverlag, 1959) (courtesy of The Library of The Jewish Theological Seminary; call number BS2615.2.K73 1959).

the middle.³⁸ This natural variation in the way Smith wrote *lambda* is not reflected in MS 65, where 96 percent of the *lambdas* have a low left leg. The consistency of this feature in MS 65 eliminates the possibility that we are dealing with a forger's lapse here, as does the fact that a high left leg is too obvious a feature for a forger to overlook so consistently if it appeared in his or her exemplars.

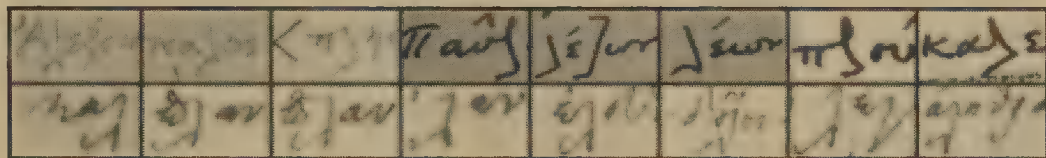


Figure 4 Smith's one-stroke *lambda* compared with MS 65.

Figure 4 compares Smith's one-stroke *lambda* with (what appear to me to be) eight one-stroke *lambdas* from MS 65.³⁹ With respect to frequency, Smith's one-stroke *lambdas* are rare (these are the only ones I have seen to date), whereas most of the *lambdas* in MS 65 appear to me to be rendered in one stroke. With respect to appearance, Smith's one-stroke *lambdas* look very different from his regular two-stroke *lambdas*, whereas the two types of *lambdas* in MS 65 normally take the same shape except for the fact that the pen does not leave the page in the one-stroke form. Smith's one-stroke *lambdas* are angled to the left, whereas those in the letter are roughly vertical or angled to the right. Most of Smith's one-stroke *lambdas* begin at the height of a tall Greek letter, whereas those in MS 65 always begin at the height of a small letter. The left leg of Smith's one-stroke *lambdas* is formed either as a right angle (which does not occur anywhere in MS 65) or as an arch to the left; as a consequence, this stroke retraces much less of the right leg if at all. The left leg

³⁸ Curiously, after the first chapter, approximately 60 percent of the *lambdas* in *Tannaitic Parallels* are formed with the left leg intersecting the middle or higher on the right leg. This difference within *Tannaitic Parallels* illustrates the importance of using multiple, extended samples when establishing normal writing behavior.

³⁹ First row: images one through three are from Smith's copy of Stählin, *Clemens*, 1:xvi; 3:178; images four through six are from Smith, letter to Goodenough; images seven and eight are from the first and second of three pages of handwritten notes that Smith made while reading C. H. Turner, "Marcan Usage: Notes, Critical and Exegetical, on the Second Gospel," *Journal of Theological Studies* [JTS] 25 (1924) 377–86; JTS 26 (1925) 12–20, 145–56, 225–40; JTS 27 (1926) 58–62; JTS 28 (1927) 9–30, 349–62; JTS 29 (1928) 275–89, 346–61. On 9 March 2006 I found these loose pages at the Jewish Theological Seminary inside Smith's copy of John Charles Doudna, *The Greek of the Gospel of Mark* (JBLMS 12; Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis, 1961) (call number BS2585.5.D6 1961). On pp. 2–3 of these notes, Smith refers to "Richardson's baptismal reading" of the longer gospel, which is the interpretation that Cyril C. Richardson proposed to Smith in a letter in mid-January 1961 (see Smith, *Secret Gospel*, 64–65; cf. 30). These notes became the basis for Smith, *Clement*, 134, and include most of the Greek phrases from the *Letter to Theodore* that appear on that page. I made photocopies for myself and left the originals with the archivist.

of the one-stroke *lambdas* in MS 65 is usually formed by a stroke that retraces part way up the right leg before branching off in an abrupt, downward angle. The top of the right leg and the bottom of the left leg curve toward each other in MS 65 but not in Smith's writing. Thus, generally speaking, the pen strokes Smith made to produce his one-stroke *lambdas* are different from the ones made in MS 65. This fact is hard to explain if the latter represent an inveterate writing habit into which Smith constantly lapsed. Indeed, the premise that Smith used eighteenth-century exemplars containing *lambdas* with a high left leg but consistently overlooked this one obvious feature, lapsing instead into a letterform he rarely used and usually wrote very differently, makes no sense at all.

The only thing that is distinctive about the *lambdas* in MS 65 is the writer's preference for a low left leg. The majority of Greek writers in the eighteenth century preferred a high left leg, but there was also a minority who preferred the middle or a low left leg or showed no evident preference at all. This fact adequately explains why all of Carlson's examples from Mar Saba purportedly have a high left leg.

With respect to the small *tau*, Smith wrote it in both one and two strokes (the latter appears in *Tannaitic Parallels*). The single-stroke form used by Smith and MS 65 has been in common use in Greek handwriting for centuries and is anything but distinctive, let alone anomalous. Since this is the regular form of small *tau* in the letter, and its use is restricted to the article τὸν (with one exception noted by Carlson),⁴⁰ it also cannot be considered a lapse. Accordingly, we have no reason to view this letterform as suspicious or to connect it specifically with Smith.

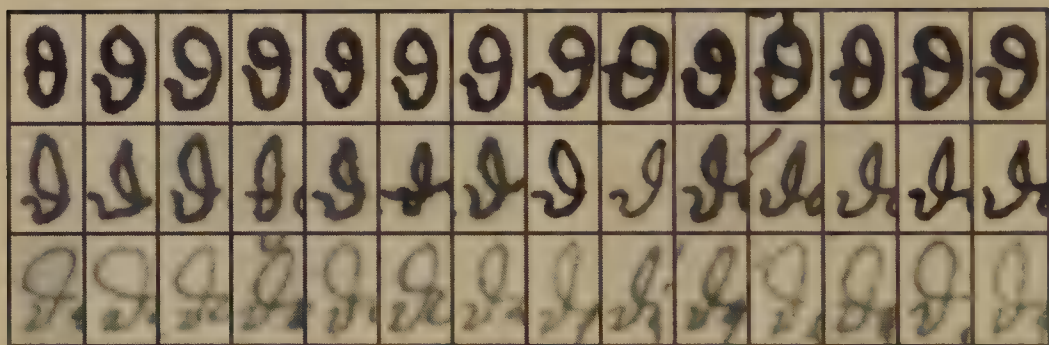


Figure 5 Smith's open theta compared with MS 65.

The top line in figure 5 reproduces the first fourteen *thetas* in *Tannaitic Parallels*. The second line reproduces the first fourteen *thetas* that Smith wrote while making notes on C. H. Turner's study "Marcan Usage."⁴¹ The third line reproduces the first fourteen *thetas* in MS 65. As with the one-stroke *tau*, there is nothing unusual about the way Smith wrote the letter *theta* with a "leading horizontal stroke." Smith and

⁴⁰ Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 29.

⁴¹ See above, n. 39.

MS 65 usually employed the one-stroke cursive form of *theta* (ϑ) that has been the standard form in Greek handwriting for many centuries. This “open *theta*” (also called script *theta* and curly *theta*) is common in printed books and is a familiar symbol in mathematics.

Again, what is most noticeable about Smith’s open *theta* is the variation, which is even wider for this letter than it is for *lambda*, perhaps because open *theta* is more elaborate. Smith learned Greek as an adult and apparently wrote this letter too infrequently to develop a regular form. The more limited variation in MS 65, however, centers around a master pattern. The *thetas* in MS 65 are almost always completed with the stroke crossing the oval, and the top halves of the letter are generally (but not always) much larger, more open, and more rounded than the bottom halves, which appear tight and angular. The letter slants to the right. Smith, by contrast, had much less of a tendency to finish the stroke by crossing the oval and a greater tendency to write without a slant (a general difference between his Greek writing and MS 65).

The one aspect of this letterform that Carlson identified as a suspicious parallel between Smith and MS 65 is the “leading horizontal stroke at midline” (e.g., 9). Forms of open *theta* without a leading stroke (θ) or with a stroke that curves upward on an angle from below midline (ϑ) appear in the eighteenth-century Mar Saba manuscripts that Carlson presented as comparisons. He describes this difference imprecisely, however, for as the extended comparisons in figure 5 reveal, both Smith’s writing and that of MS 65 exhibit no fixed angle or length of leading stroke. The variability in the way they render this feature is common in informal Greek handwriting. MS 65 is basically an informal documentary hand. Although the distinction is not clear-cut, it is the more formal and aesthetic book hands, like the ones in Carlson’s figures 2b and 2c, that attempt to keep this feature of the letter consistent and, in some cases, ornate. If there is anything unusual here, it is the fact that Smith’s leading stroke frequently descends on an angle.

Given the wide variation in the way Smith wrote this letterform, it is easy to find the occasional “match” between one of his *thetas* and one in MS 65, but to present such random similarities as evidence of common authorship is highly dubious. For in handwriting identification, what matters is agreement in the master pattern and in the range of natural variation, which we clearly do not have here.

None of Carlson’s four alleged similarities between Smith’s writing and MS 65 satisfy more than one of the four criteria for evidence of common authorship. It is hard to imagine a less compelling paleographical argument tying this manuscript to Morton Smith.

Later in his book Carlson mentions in passing the existence of “modern letter forms” in MS 65.⁴² This statement is surprising because he did not establish that any of the letterforms in this manuscript do not appear in eighteenth-century Greek

⁴² Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 71.

handwriting. He merely mischaracterized these four letterforms as “anomalous” because they purportedly do not appear in the samples he obtained of eighteenth-century manuscripts from Mar Saba.

■ Exhibit Three: The Allusion to Morton Salt

Argument: We return to Carlson’s exposé of deliberate clues left by Morton Smith. Carlson detects an intentional anachronism in the *Letter to Theodore* 1.11–15, which reads, “Now of the things they [the Carpocratians] keep saying about the divinely inspired Gospel according to Mark, some are altogether falsifications, and others, even if they do contain some true elements, nevertheless are not reported truly. For the true things, being mixed with inventions, are falsified, so that, as the saying goes, even the salt loses its savor.” The problem with this statement, as Carlson sees it, is that “it presupposes salt technology that did not exist in Clement’s place and time”:

The imagery in *Theodore* involves mixing an adulterant with salt and spoiling its taste. For salt to be mixed with such an adulterant, it would have to be loose and free-flowing, but free-flowing salt is a modern invention. Pure salt draws moisture from the air, forming clumps, and often requires a mallet to be broken apart for domestic use. In 1910, however, a chemist at the Morton Salt Company discovered that salt’s tendency to form clumps in humidity can be prevented by adding a small amount of an anti-caking agent to uniform-sized salt crystals obtained from vacuum-pan evaporation.⁴³

Carlson explains that for “the modern reader of *Theodore* . . . the salt allusion is natural: free-flowing salt was and continues to be mixed with other ingredients perceived as affecting its taste. This was particularly true starting in the 1930s when Morton Salt added another ingredient to their table salt, harsh-tasting potassium iodide for the prevention of endemic goiter.”⁴⁴ But for an ancient reader, the salt metaphor would not make sense, for the technology did not exist for mixing salt with other foodstuffs, and the adulteration of salt was not an issue. We have no evidence of the intentional adulteration of salt “even in Pliny’s encyclopedic discussion of adulterated foodstuffs.” So the letter contains a metaphor that would

⁴³ Ibid., 60.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 61. The addition of iodine was made in 1924, not “the 1930s” (or “the mid-twentieth-century,” as Carlson states on p. 71), and the anti-caking agent was invented in 1911, not 1910, which is the year Morton Salt incorporated. See Mark Kurlansky, *Salt: A World History* (New York: Walker, 2002) 427; Pierre Laszlo, *Salt: Grain of Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001) 140; and Morton Salt, “History,” http://www.mortonsalt.com/consumer/about_us/history/index.htm. It is worth clarifying that the vacuum-pan evaporation process was not invented by the chemist at Morton Salt; it was already used for sugar in the early 1800s and was adapted to salt in 1887 at Silver Springs, New York, by Joseph Duncan of the Worcester Salt company. See Kurlansky, *Salt*, 328–29; Garnett Laidlaw Eskew, *Salt, the Fifth Element: The Story of a Basic American Industry* (Chicago: J. G. Ferguson, 1948) 151, 169–70.

not have made sense to its reader prior to Morton Salt's invention. Morton Salt contains Smith's given name, so Smith himself planted this "damning" "technological anachronism" as a clue to his authorship.⁴⁵

Assessment: This argument is one long sequence of mistakes, beginning with Carlson's initial premise that "the imagery in *Theodore* involves mixing an adulterant with salt and spoiling its taste."⁴⁶ The letter nowhere refers to salt being mixed with anything. It is "the true things" spoken by the Carpocratians that are mixed with inventions, so presumably Carlson has inferred that the salt saying is intended as an analogy for how the true things are made false, as if the author wrote, "for the true things, being mixed with inventions, are falsified, just as salt (being mixed with adulterants) loses its savor."

But that is not what the author wrote. The syntax of the sentence precludes the dependent clause containing the salt saying from reiterating the independent clause in the form of an analogy. Instead, the conjunction ὥστε indicates that the dependent clause conveys a consequence or result of the independent clause.⁴⁷ The coordinating conjunction is properly translated "so that" or "with the result that" instead of "just as" or "much as," which is what an analogy requires. Furthermore, the phrase "as indeed the saying goes" (τοῦτο δὴ τὸ λεγόμενον) indicates that the salt saying is being employed in its conventional sense, which is unlikely to have anything to do with *how* salt loses its savor. The proverbial meaning of the expression "even the salt loses its savor" is evident from its connection with two sayings of Jesus, specifically, "Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you season it?" (Mark 9:50//Luke 14:34) and "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men" (Matt 5:13//Luke 14:35). In both cases, salt signifies goodness or a good influence, whereas the loss of its taste signifies uselessness.⁴⁸ Thus salt losing its savor is a metaphor for the loss of innate goodness and value. The adverb "even" (καί) indicates that this loss is surprising.

⁴⁵ Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 61.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 60 (see also 59).

⁴⁷ The sentence in question (*Letter to Theodore* 1.13–15) reads, συγκεκραμένα γὰρ τᾶληθῇ τοῖς πλάσμασι παραχαράσσεται ὥστε—τοῦτο δὴ τὸ λεγόμενον—"καὶ τὸ ἅλας μωρανθῆναι." When ὥστε introduces a dependent clause with the subject in the accusative and the verb in the infinitive, BDAG [Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (3d ed.; Chicago, 1999)] gives the translation "of the actual result *so that*" (s.v. ὥστε, 2aβ).

⁴⁸ On the goodness of salt, see Origen *Contra Celsum* 8.70; Jerome *Adversus Luciferianos* 5. Numerous examples of how salt was used as a symbol of goodness and value are offered in Pliny *Naturalis historia* 31.41. On "the fate of savorless salt" as indicating "utter uselessness," see James E. Latham, *The Religious Symbolism of Salt* (Théologie historique 64; Paris: Beauchesne, 1982) 216–17.

None of the words coordinating the salt saying with the preceding clause make sense within an interpretation that supposes that the dependent clause reiterates the independent clause in the form of an analogy. That fact is readily illustrated by adding into the sentence the words that Carlson assumes to be implicit:

For the true things, being mixed with inventions, are falsified, with the result that, as the saying goes, even the salt, *being mixed with adulterants*, loses its savor.

Clearly the comparison that Carlson imagines must be expressed differently:

For the true things, being mixed with inventions, are falsified, *just as* salt, *being mixed with adulterants*, loses its savor.

Carlson's theory requires not only a thorough revision of the coordinating words but also a strictly literal reading of the word *salt*, despite its connection with the metaphorical sayings in the gospels. What Carlson offers us, then, is not a "damning" anachronism, but unseasoned exegesis.

In order to appreciate the actual metaphorical comparison expressed through the salt saying, we must interpret this saying as a corollary of the mixing of "true things" with "inventions." The true things in question are the passages from the longer Gospel of Mark that Theodore wrote to Clement about. Clement is explaining to Theodore that these passages have been falsified by the "inventions" and "shameless lies" that Carpocrates added to his copy of this gospel, such as the words "naked man with naked man" and "the many other things about which [Theodore] wrote" (*Letter to Theodore* 1.13–14; 2.8–9; 3.13, 17). The additions "polluted" the longer text of the Carpocratians, with the result that "the spotless and holy words" inspired by God have been nullified. What is implicit within this sentence may be rendered so:

For the true things *which the Carpocratians say about the longer text*, being mixed with inventions, are falsified, with the result that, as the saying goes, even the "salt" [the goodness and value of the longer gospel] loses its savor [is lost].

This statement does not imply Carlson's notion of salt being mixed with other substances, and the sentence would make little sense if it appeared there.

The problems with Carlson's exposition of an anachronism alluding to "the iodization of table salt by the Morton Salt Company" extend beyond the syntax of the sentence to the literal sense and proverbial point of the expression "even the salt loses its savor."⁴⁹ The verb in this phrase (the passive of *μωραίνω*) means either to become insipid (without taste) or to become foolish (without wisdom).⁵⁰ When applied to food and condiments, it refers to a lack of taste, not a modification in taste. Clearly, the addition of iodine does not cause table salt to become insipid (would

⁴⁹ Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 79, 71.

⁵⁰ For a discussion of this verb, see Latham, *Religious Symbolism of Salt*, 195–202.

anyone use it if it did?), so Carlson's focus on a chemical that supposedly adds a sharpness to salt disregards the literal meaning of the saying. In point of fact, the added iodine has no demonstrable effect on the taste of salt, so Carlson's reference to "harsh-tasting potassium iodide" is simply deceptive.⁵¹ Iodized table salt not only tastes the same as plain table salt but also retains all of its other beneficial qualities. It is in fact more beneficial than plain table salt because it counters iodine deficiency disorders, including goiter, hypothyroidism, and cretinism, so the proposed allusion to iodized salt also disregards the point of this expression, which is that something intrinsically beneficial can become worthless. Again, these problems are readily illustrated by rewriting the sentence to fit Carlson's argument:

For the true things, being mixed with inventions, are falsified, with the result that, as the saying goes, even the salt, *being mixed with adulterants, tastes less pleasant.*

Carlson's theory requires this nonsensical revision of the salt metaphor because the table salt produced by Morton Salt, and other salt companies, is a highly refined form of a stable chemical compound, sodium chloride. Pure salt cannot lose its

⁵¹ Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 61. Every scientific study of the effect of iodine on salt has concluded that there is no discernable effect on taste. For summaries of these studies, see Clive E. West and Richard J. H. M. Merx, "Effect of Iodized Salt on the Colour and Taste of Food," Report of a Study Carried Out at the Request of Unicef, New York under Contract No. PD/95/009 (June 1995), http://www.micronutrient.org/Salt_CD/4.0_useful/4.1_fulltext/pdfs/4.1.4.pdf; and Ray J. Winger et al., "Technological Issues with Iodine Fortification of Foods," Final Report for New Zealand Food Safety Authority (May 2005), <http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/science/research-projects/iodine-fort/iodine-fort-foods.pdf> (pp. 5–6). Carlson addresses this fact in an endnote, explaining that larger amounts of potassium iodide were originally necessary because the compound was unstable. When dextrose was added to stabilize the compound, smaller amounts of potassium iodide could be used (*Gospel Hoax*, 123 n. 48). Carlson cited the above paper by West and Merx as evidence that "people *now* are not *usually* able" (emphasis added) to taste the difference, but that study offers no support whatsoever for the contentions that most people once could—and gourmards still can—distinguish a difference in taste, and actually undermines Carlson's explanation of why this was once possible. With one exception, this study found no effect of iodine on the taste of food: "The only exception was an effect on the flavour of tomato juice with the highest concentration of iodine-iodide mixture (200 mg mixture/kg can content). However, the concentration of iodine/iodide reached in the cans was more than 100 times that which would be added normally to tomato juice. Thus a large excess of iodine/iodide is required before changes in taste can be detected" (p. 4). This paper's own experiment to determine the effect on food quality of salt with iodine levels of 400 ppm concluded that this level of iodine, which is "four times higher than the maximum level recommended by UNICEF/WHO/ICCIDD," "does not effect [*sic*] the flavour and general appearance of boiled potatoes and boiled rice" (pp. 10, 11). These conclusions do not bode well for the notion that iodized salt tasted unpleasant prior to the addition of stabilizing chemicals, considering that the level of iodine was 200 ppm when iodized salt was introduced in the United States. Moreover, by 1936, three years before Edwin B. Hart discovered a means of stabilizing the compound, the iodine content of most American brands of iodized salt was 100 ppm, a level that is known to have no discernible effect on the taste of salt. See O. P. Kimball, "History of the Prevention of Endemic Goitre," *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 9 (1953) 241–48. So even if it were true that iodized salt once tasted unpleasant, few people would have remembered that taste by the late 1950s. The issue is moot, however, since the verb *μωραίνω* denotes a lack of salt's distinctive taste, not the addition of another taste.

savor. The imagery in the letter presupposes an impure form of salt that can lose its sodium chloride without the compound disappearing altogether. Many of the salts used in antiquity were of this sort. As Pliny noted, the salt in these impure compounds was occasionally dissolved away by water, leaving "salt" that lacked its distinctive savor: "The drier the salt, the stronger it is in taste; but the most agreeable of all, and the whitest known, is that of Tarentum. In addition to these particulars, we would remark also, that the whiter salt is, the more friable it is. Rain-water deadens every kind of salt, but dew-water makes it more delicate in flavour" (*Naturalis historia* 31.41).⁵² The fact that sodium chloride dissolves more readily than the other compounds in complex salts creates a serious problem when these salts are stored on earthen floors, for if the ground becomes damp, "the sodium chloride [is] dissolved and leached away," leaving a residue that, as Jesus put it, "is no longer good for anything."⁵³

In addition to these exegetical errors, Carlson has erred in supposing that salt needs to be processed and "free flowing" in order for its taste to be modified through interaction with other substances. When theological dictionaries explain how salt can lose its savor, they often note that "the complex salts of Palestine . . . can lose savor through physical disintegration or through mixture with gypsum."⁵⁴ When windblown gypsum dust covers salt, it masks the sodium chloride, leaving "a stale and alkaline taste."⁵⁵ Thus, impure salt can lose its sodium chloride (through leaching or disintegration) or acquire an unpleasant taste (through mixture with gypsum) prior to being processed. Furthermore, the free-flowing property of modern table salt is not a requirement for mixing. For thousands of years, people have used mortar and pestle to grind chunks of salt into grains that are small enough to sprinkle onto food and mix with other substances. Thus Morton Salt's invention of an anti-caking agent is irrelevant to our understanding of the letter's salt metaphor, which envisions complex salts and is not at all concerned with how salt loses its taste but merely with the fact that this sometimes happens. Although the deadening of salt's taste was unusual, the ancients were more familiar with this phenomenon than are patrons of Morton Salt. It is the modern readers of the gospels who won-

⁵² *The Natural History of Pliny* (trans. John Bostock and Henry T. Riley; Bohn's Classical Library; London: H. G. Bohn, 1856) 5:504. Robert P. Multhauf explains the different effect of dew-water on salt by noting that "the gentle moistening of mist and dew would dissolve and wash away the chlorides of calcium and magnesium, while leaving the sodium chloride largely unaffected due to its non-hygroscopicity and consequent resistance to dissolution" (*Neptune's Gift: A History of Common Salt* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978] 125, 128–29).

⁵³ Eugene P. Deatrick, "Salt, Soil, Savior," *Biblical Archaeologist* 25 (1962) 42.

⁵⁴ Deatrick, "Salt, Soil, Savior," 44. Likewise, *The New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible* (ed. Henry Snyder Gehman; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970) 820; Norman Hillyer, "ἅλας," in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (ed. Colin Brown; Exeter: Paternoster, 1978) 3:446.

⁵⁵ Deatrick, "Salt, Soil, Savior," 43. The quotation is from Friedrich Hauck, "ἅλας," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 1 (1969) 229.

der how salt can lose its savor and need to be told that unprocessed salt is often impure. The salt saying in the letter would have made more sense to Clement's contemporaries than it does to us.

■ Exhibit Four: The Confession Hidden in the Ellipsis

Argument: Having misinterpreted the words “even the salt loses its savor” as a deliberate anachronism, Carlson proceeds to argue that Smith covertly embedded his surname in the section of his commentary that discusses this metaphor as part of his supposed confession of authorship. No, the word *Smith* does not actually appear here. But another word *containing* the word *smith*, at least when translated into English (“every goldsmith [χρυσόχοος] is put to shame by his idols”), *would have appeared* in the ellipsis of a sentence that Smith quoted from the Septuagint translation of Jeremiah:

Mt. 5.13, ἐὰν δὲ τὸ ἅλας μωρανθῇ, ἐν τίνι ἀλισθήσεται; = Lk. 14.34. The text here is closer to Lk., which differs from Mt. by beginning ἐὰν δὲ καί. Behind the choice of this proverb probably lies not only recollection of the context of these Gospel passages (and Mk. 9.50), which declare corrupted Christians fit only to be cast out, but also recollection of Jeremiah 28.17 (LXX) (= 10.14 Heb.) ἐμωράνθη πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ἀπὸ γνώσεως . . . ὅτι ψευδῇ ἐχώνευσαν, οὐκ ἔστιν πνεῦμα ἐν αὐτοῖς (and ff), which made the verse particularly appropriate for use against gnostics who had corrupted the Scriptures. This sort of multiple biblical allusion is typical of Clement and would be very difficult for a forger to imitate. In III.183.23ff Clement identifies as “the salt of the earth” those “more elect than the elect,” “who hide away, in the depth of thought, the mysteries not to be uttered.”⁵⁶

Carlson finds Smith's suggestion of an allusion to Jeremiah very suspicious. Translating the sentence from Jeremiah as “every person is made dull from knowledge . . . because they have cast false things, there is no breath in them,” he notes that “the linkage to Matthew 5:13's use of ‘cast out’ works only in English, not in Greek. . . . The only verbal commonality in the Greek lies in different forms of the verb μωρανθῆναι/ἐμωράνθη. . . . Such an allusion based on casting out could only be ‘typical of Clement’ if Clement knew English.”⁵⁷

For Carlson, Smith's confusion is unthinkable “in light of his otherwise superlative exegetical ability,” so it must be a deliberate hint that the allusion to Jeremiah is about something else. Carlson finds the clue to Smith's intention in Smith's next sentence, which notes that for Clement, “the salt of the earth” signifies the true gnostics who hide away mysteries in the depth of thought. In Carlson's words, “The connection between Morton Smith and Morton Salt signifies that this comment applies to himself—that he has hidden away a mystery not to be uttered. Smith's use

⁵⁶ Smith, *Clement*, 18–19.

⁵⁷ Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 62.

of an ellipsis in the Jeremiah 28:17 passage is the ‘unuttered mystery’ to which he then refers.” The statement about goldsmiths in the ellipsis thus indicates that longer Mark is “a graven image that will confound its own smith: Morton Smith.”⁵⁸

Assessment: Carlson’s rationale for taking the ellipsis as a cleverly concealed mystery hinges upon the letter’s allusion to Morton Salt, which does not exist, and the premise that Smith’s inference of an allusion to Jeremiah is based on Smith’s association of two words that can be rendered as homonyms in English but have no connection in Greek. I concur that such an association would be a “howler.”⁵⁹ But since Smith left the sentence from Jeremiah untranslated and did not call attention to the words “cast out” when summarizing Matt 5:13, it is not at all clear that Smith did associate Jeremiah’s “cast (a mould)” with Matthew’s “cast (something) out.” Carlson simply inferred this association. Evidently he reasoned that the shared verb *μωρανθῆναι* in the saying: “But if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?” and the passage in Jeremiah is not enough to justify Smith’s claim of an allusion, so Smith must have implied that the passage in Jeremiah in some way parallels the idea of “corrupted Christians fit only to be cast out.” Since the only commonality Carlson could perceive between Matt 5:13b and the quotation from Jeremiah was the verb “cast” in his own English translation, Carlson deduced that Smith made an unthinkable exegetical error.

Apparently Carlson did not consider the possibility that the parallelism with Matt 5:13b exists not in the words Smith quoted from Jeremiah but in the continuation of this verse indicated by “(and ff)” at the end of Smith’s quotation. Smith would not have added “ff” unless the words following the quoted words were relevant to the point he was trying to make, and indeed the next sentence in Jeremiah parallels the concepts of worthlessness and destruction in Matt 5:13b:

They [the lifeless idols] are worthless, objects of ridicule; at the time of their visitation they shall perish. (Jer 28:18 LXX; trans. mine)

It [the savorless salt] is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men. (Matt 5:13b)

In other words, the parallelism Smith perceived involved not only the context of the Greek words that he quoted from Matthew and Luke but also the context of the Greek words that he quoted from Jeremiah. It had nothing to do with the English word “cast.” The ellipsis in Smith’s quotation is a straightforward indication that the omitted words were not relevant to his point.

Although the allusion to Jeremiah that Smith proposed is not particularly convincing, it is not nearly so incredible as the mystery Carlson read into this allusion based on his own English translation of Jer 28:17 and neglect of Smith’s appeal

⁵⁸ Ibid., 62–63.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 75.

to the larger context. Carlson's highly unorthodox approach to interrogating texts has elicited another false confession.

■ Preamble to Exhibit Five:

The Life Setting of the Gospel Excerpts

Argument: Carlson's last argument connecting the *Letter to Theodore* with Morton Smith is the most complicated. Essentially, he tries to show that the reference to the mystery of the kingdom of God in the letter's gospel quotation connotes a forbidden sexual encounter (homosexuality) using a twentieth-century euphemism and that Smith made this association in his writings prior to his discovery of the text. Instead of summarizing this lengthy argument at the outset, I shall critique it step by step. This topic requires familiarity with the gospel quotation, so I shall begin by reproducing Smith's English translation, using the standard versification:

Longer Gospel of Mark (LGM) 1: (After Mark 10:34.) ¹ And they come into Bethany. And a certain woman whose brother had died was there. ² And, coming, she prostrated herself before Jesus and says to him, "Son of David, have mercy on me." ³ But the disciples rebuked her. ⁴ And Jesus, being angered, went off with her into the garden where the tomb was, ⁵ and straightway a great cry was heard from the tomb. ⁶ And going near Jesus rolled away the stone from the door of the tomb. ⁷ And straightway, going in where the youth was, he stretched forth his hand and raised him, seizing his hand. ⁸ But the youth, looking upon him, loved him and began to beseech him that he might be with him. ⁹ And going out of the tomb they came into the house of the youth, for he was rich. ¹⁰ And after six days Jesus told him what to do ¹¹ and in the evening the youth comes to him, wearing a linen cloth over his naked body. ¹² And he remained with him that night, for Jesus taught him the mystery of the kingdom of God. ¹³ And thence, arising, he returned to the other side of the Jordan.

LGM 2: (Within Mark 10:46.) ^{10:46a} And he comes into Jericho. ¹ And the sister of the youth whom Jesus loved and his mother and Salome were there, ² and Jesus did not receive them.

Assessment: Carlson's attempt to prove that these verses anachronistically depict a modern homosexual encounter begins with an attempt to prove that the sentence "and he remained with him that night, for Jesus was teaching him the mystery of the kingdom of God" is a creation by the author of "secret" Mark: "The latter part of this sentence is a close parallel to Mark 4:11 but the main clause does not parallel the gospels but rather is crafted by the author of *Secret Mark*. Both its climactic location [within the pericope] and its composed, unparalleled nature indicate that it was carefully constructed by its author."⁶⁰ It is difficult to follow the logic here. Even if the clause "and he remained with him that night" were unparalleled in the

⁶⁰ Ibid., 66.

gospels (it does have a parallel), that would not prove that the author of “secret” Mark composed it. When unique statements in the gospels contain no traces of redaction, scholars are free to ascribe them to oral tradition. Carlson cannot exclude that possibility here without presuming what he ultimately intends to prove, namely, that longer Mark is a modern composition. And why should the climactic position of this sentence prove that it was composed—even *carefully* composed—by the author of longer Mark? The climax of a gospel pericope is frequently the most secure traditional element, as in the case of pronouncement sayings at the conclusion of controversy stories.⁶¹

Having reasoned that the clause “and he remained with him that night” is an important sentence created by the author of longer Mark, Carlson attempts to prove that this sentence does not mean what it says. The obvious meaning, which is that the young man stayed with Jesus after sunset because Jesus was teaching him, is rejected by Carlson because it is too “bland” to fit the “compositional importance” of the sentence and would simply repeat information the reader already knows about Jesus’ “lodging arrangement.”⁶² Both claims are incorrect. The reader will probably infer that Jesus resided at the young man’s house for a week but has no reason to infer that they shared the same room at night. Ordinary hospitality dictates that a guest in a rich man’s house receive a guest room. Paul, for instance, expected Philemon to prepare a guest room for him in case he showed up (Philemon’s house was large enough to accommodate a church; see Phlm 1–2, 22). The fact that the young man comes to Jesus rather than the other way around, even though they are both inside the young man’s house, makes more sense if Jesus had a guest room.⁶³ So the reader will probably not assume that Jesus and the young man stayed together in the same room every night and that the clause “and he remained with him that night” is superfluous. Rather, this clause implies that this was the only night that the young man remained in Jesus’ room.

Carlson’s argument that this clause cannot mean something as banal as it appears to mean is disproved by a parallel to this statement in John 1:39: “They [two disciples of John] came and saw where he [Jesus] was staying; and they stayed

⁶¹ For example, the climatic pronouncement “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Mark 12:17) is likely an authentic saying of Jesus. Similarly, the climactic sentence “And he rose, and immediately took up the pallet and went out before them all” (Mark 2:12) is paralleled in a different healing story in John 5:9 (“And at once the man was healed, and he took up his pallet and walked”) and may derive from oral tradition.

⁶² Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 66.

⁶³ Smith (*Clement*, 114, 115) found this detail peculiar. He reasoned that the young man’s house was a villa and argued that Jesus and his disciples stayed in their own wing. These inferences are hard to justify on the basis of the text, yet since Carlson believes that Smith composed this text himself, Smith’s conception that Jesus and his disciples lodged together in another wing of the house is incompatible with Carlson’s inference that “and he remained with him that night” conveys nothing new.

with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.” As Raymond E. Brown pointed out, the verbal parallels with LGM 1:12 are strong:

καὶ παρ’ αὐτῷ ἔμειναν τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκείνην. (John 1:39b)

καὶ ἔμεινε σὺν αὐτῷ τὴν νύκτα ἐκείνην. (LGM 1:12a)

In his 1966 commentary on the Gospel of John, Brown reasoned that the phrase “they remained with him that day” probably means that the disciples stayed with Jesus overnight, because the tenth hour, according to the Jewish reckoning of time, is about four in the afternoon (a new day begins at sunset).⁶⁴ The narrator is explaining that these two individuals lodged with Jesus because the hour was already late. Carlson discounted this parallel by observing that “the preposition, [the] word order, the time period, and the number of the verb are all different,” adding that “Brown’s proposed parallel in another gospel actually shows how different [*sic*, distinctive?] this clause is.”⁶⁵ Of course, if these features were exactly the same in both texts, we would not be dealing with a parallel at all but with a repetition. What makes a parallel a parallel and not a repetition are the differences. One *could* argue, for example, that “even the salt loses its savor” is unrelated to “But if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?” by noting even more of the same sort of differences, but that maneuver would ignore the patent similarities that make the comparison legitimate and helpful. In the case of John 1:39b and LGM 1:12a, none of the verbal differences affect the meaning: the different prepositions and time periods are semantically equivalent; the different position of the verb in relation to the prepositional phrase is semantically irrelevant; and the different number of the verb μένω merely reflects the different number of the subject. Moreover, there is a remarkable agreement between these two incidents: They take place in an otherwise unattested “Bethany” on the east side of the Jordan River (John 1:28; LGM 1:1).⁶⁶ This fact indicates that LGM 1:12a is a different form of John 1:39b and not just a similar sentence.

Other similarities between LGM 1:8–13 and John 1:35–40 are worth noting at this point. In both passages admirers of Jesus look intently at him, and men who have just met him express their desire to become disciples by indicating that they

⁶⁴ Raymond E. Brown, “The Relation of ‘the Secret Gospel of Mark’ to the Fourth Gospel,” *CBQ* 36 (1974) 479; idem, *The Gospel According to John* (2 vols.; 2d ed.; Anchor Bible 29; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1982) 1:75. For additional discussion of John 1:39, see Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004) 74–76.

⁶⁵ Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 125 n. 3.

⁶⁶ See Scott G. Brown, “Bethany Beyond the Jordan: John 1:28 and the Longer Gospel of Mark,” *Revue Biblique* 110 (2003) 497–516; idem, “The Secret Gospel of Mark: Is It Real? And Does It Identify ‘Bethany beyond the Jordan’?” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 31 (2005) 44–49, 60–61; idem, *Mark’s Other Gospel*, 90–92.

want to be with him. In the Fourth Gospel, John the Baptist, “looking upon Jesus” (ἐμβλέψας τῷ Ἰησοῦ), says, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” Hearing this, two of his disciples start to follow Jesus, the way disciples follow their teacher. When Jesus asks, “What do you seek?” they phrase their request to become his disciples as, “‘Rabbi’ (which means Teacher), ‘where are you staying?’” Jesus replies, “Come and see.” In other words, they express a desire to be with him, and Jesus consents. In longer Mark, as soon as Jesus raises the young man, the latter, “looking upon him [ἐμβλέψας αὐτῷ] loved him and began to beseech him that he might be with him.” They then go to his house. That this request to “be with him” is a request to be a disciple is evident from the larger context. Mark used the words “began to beseech him that he might be with him” (5:18; exactly in D) to describe the way the man formerly possessed by Legion implored Jesus to let him join his group. Jesus declined but commissioned him to preach on his own. Mark likewise used the expression “to be with him” (3:14) to denote Jesus’ closest disciples: “And he appointed twelve, to be with him, and to be sent out to preach.” So although these two accounts of men staying with Jesus in Bethany differ in many respects, they are different versions of the same story, much as LGM 1:1–7 and John 10:40–11:46 are different versions of the same raising miracle.

This parallel story in the Gospel of John proves that a gospel pericope can end with a banal description of Jesus staying overnight with an anonymous disciple without this comment requiring “an idiomatic meaning that goes beyond mere lodging.”⁶⁷ Indeed, the banality of this incident within the context of the Fourth Gospel is perhaps the most interesting thing about it, for whereas LGM 1:12 indicates that Jesus spent the night teaching his new disciple the mystery that separates “those outside” from disciples (Mark 4:10–12), John 1:39 simply indicates that Jesus stayed overnight with two new disciples because it made sense for them to do that. This information seems so unedifying that some commentators feel compelled to propose that the verb μένω (“remained”) must have the theological overtones of “abiding in” Christ and his teachings that it later acquires in the course of John’s narrative.⁶⁸ In other words, they read into this statement an evening of theological teaching, like LGM 1:12. But no one supposes that the incident is actually about casual sex.

What Carlson wants to suggest, of course, is that “remained with him that night” must be a euphemism for sexual intercourse, specifically, the twentieth-century euphemism “spent the night together” or “spent the night with him.” The longer gospel’s own explanation for why the young man stayed with Jesus that night poses

⁶⁷ Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 66.

⁶⁸ Consider, for example, D. Moody Smith, *John* (Abingdon New Testament Commentaries; Nashville: Abingdon, 1999) 72: “The time of day, the tenth hour . . . is a superficial explanation of their reason for staying, but probably not the real and profound one. They want to abide with Jesus (cf. 15:1–11). Their abiding will be the fulfillment of their quest, but not, ultimately, until Jesus is glorified.”

a problem for this thesis because it confines their activity to instruction and specifies the subject matter as the same eschatological mystery that is concealed within the parables of Mark 4. Carlson solves this problem by rewriting the sentence: "The clause's bland recital of their lodging arrangement thus conveys almost no additional information and belongs more to the background, for instance, with something like: 'Jesus taught him the mystery of the kingdom of God, for he spent that night with him.'"⁶⁹ Now spending that night together is itself the mystery of the kingdom of God and not the circumstance in which Jesus imparted an eschatological mystery. Eventually, the adjective *that* drops out of Carlson's translation as he silently assimilates the actual phrase "stayed with him *that* night" to the actual idiom "spent *the* night with him." It hardly needs to be said that rewriting a sentence in order to make it express a preconceived meaning does not constitute exegesis. Exegesis is reading out of a sentence the meaning that it has within its immediate and larger contexts. Where gospels are concerned, this involves reading it as part of a pericope and reading that pericope as an episode within a larger narrative. It also involves respecting the literary techniques employed by the author, since these exist to guide the reader's interpretation. This is the domain of narrative criticism, and it is the method I followed in part 2 of *Mark's Other Gospel*.

Longer Mark's incident of nocturnal instruction makes sense within the larger context of Mark's gospel as an incident of private discipleship instruction. In Mark 4:10–12, Jesus revealed to "those who were about him with the twelve" that a particular mystery concerning the coming reign of God has been reserved for them. "Those outside" are prevented from understanding this mystery by the fact that, to them, "everything occurs in parables" (i.e., riddles), with the result that they do not understand what they see and hear and accordingly do not repent and receive forgiveness. Both the insiders and the outsiders "see" and "hear" the parabolic deeds and words of Jesus, but only the insiders receive private explanations relating to this mystery. Since this mystery "has been given" to the larger group of Jesus' disciples, and Jesus granted the young man's request to "be with him," the young man likewise receives private instruction in the mystery of the kingdom of God. As with the parable discourse, the author does not directly disclose the content of this mystery to the reader but does supply enough clues to allow the reader to perceive its meaning.⁷⁰

There are two more steps in Carlson's argument for reading "remained with him that night" as a euphemism for sexual intercourse. First, he notes that longer Mark "contains explicit statements of love between the two males plus Jesus' rejection of three different women"; these details establish "an exclusive sexual preference" for Jesus.⁷¹ The phrases in question are "But the youth, looking upon him, loved

⁶⁹ Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 66.

⁷⁰ For my views on that subject, see Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*, 205–14.

⁷¹ Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 68.

him and began to beseech him that he might be with him” and “the sister of the youth whom Jesus loved and his mother and Salome were there, and Jesus did not receive them.” Carlson offers no explanation for his simplistic equation of love and rejection with sexual orientation, presumably because this equation would be difficult to substantiate exegetically. The obvious reason for the young man’s love for Jesus is the fact that Jesus delivered him from the grave. The platonic nature of this love is evident from his immediate resolve to become Jesus’ disciple. Like the man who had been possessed by Legion, the young man responded to his savior by begging to join his group.

Jesus’ love for the young man is conveyed as an afterthought in LGM 2:1, where the sister is described as “the sister of the youth whom Jesus loved.” What is the nature of this love? Some scholars, including Smith, suppose that this rich young man is the same man who asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. Of him, the narrator reported, “And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said to him, ‘You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor’” (Mark 10:21). I doubt that these men are the same individual.⁷² In my view, the phrase “whom Jesus loved” signifies a bond of friendship like the parallel description of Lazarus in John 11:3: “Lord, he whom you love is ill.” This bond is much more emphatic in John’s version of this story, where Jesus actually cries at Lazarus’s tomb and “the Jews” remark, “See how he loved him!” (11:5, 35–36).

Carlson’s inference that LGM 2 helps establish Jesus’ exclusive sexual preference is even more arbitrary and implausible. A variety of motives could explain Jesus’ refusal to meet with these three women. One very plausible explanation emerges from Jesus’ actions earlier in this narrative. At Mark 3:19b–21, 31–35, Jesus’ mother and brothers resolved to take control of him, but when they arrived at his home, Jesus refused to receive them, explaining to those around him that his true family consists of those who do the will of God. Given this precedent, the reader may infer that the same thing is happening in LGM 2. The young man’s mother and sister intend to assert control over the son (it is unclear whether Salome is related to them), but Jesus anticipates their intentions and refuses to give them an audience. This action says no more about Jesus’ sexual orientation than did his rudeness to the Syrophoenician woman (Mark 7:24–30). Carlson’s presumption that Jesus rejects the women because they are women disregards the fact that homosexuality is a sexual orientation, not a generalized aversion to the opposite sex. Indeed, gay men often have enviably close friendships with women. The only way homosexuality could explain Jesus’ rudeness in LGM 2 is if we presume, on the one hand, that the three women intended to seduce Jesus, and, on the other, that the immorality of having sex with a disciple’s mother *and* her daughter *and* a third woman is not a sufficient reason for him to snub them. Why would we assume this?

⁷² Smith, *Clement*, 171–72 and the annotation at the bottom of p. 169 in his personal copy of this book, which resides in the rare book room of the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary. Brown, *Mark’s Other Gospel*, 102.

Other explanations of LGM 2:2 are possible as well. Some scholars have interpreted Jesus' rudeness in terms of male chauvinism. Cyril C. Richardson, for instance, suggested that this verse "perhaps . . . reflects an Encratite group which *did* reject women."⁷³ Smith himself viewed the clause "and Jesus did not receive them" as a gloss added by a redactor who eliminated a discourse between Jesus and Salome. Smith reasoned that "the story, as it stands, can have been invented and preserved only as polemic against these women or their followers or persons who appealed to their authority (as the Carpocratians did to that of Salome: Origen, *Contra Celsum* V.62)."⁷⁴ Thus Smith believed that longer Mark originally depicted Jesus accepting and conversing with these women, indeed, validating Salome's authority. Smith never changed his mind about this. The annotation on page 190 of his personal copy of *Clement* acknowledges Richardson's explanation of LGM 2:2 and then states, "But he doesn't notice that it's secondary." Two years before his death Smith encouraged John Dart to eliminate LGM 2:2 from his reconstruction of the original form of Mark because Mark would not have used the Lukan-sounding verb ἀπεδέξατο ("received").⁷⁵ Carlson's sexual interpretation of this verse is not only implausible but also incompatible with that of the man who he claims is its author.

Carlson's argument for reading "and he remained with him that night" as a twentieth-century euphemism concludes with an attempt to demonstrate that ancient readers would have detected nothing sexual in this statement because 1) it has no euphemistic meaning in Greek and 2) homosexual relationships in the Roman world normally occurred between persons of unequal status, whereas the twenty-something rich man and the thirty-something messiah were social equals. Only modern readers, who are familiar with the English euphemism "spent the night together" and with homosexual relationships between social peers, could see the sexual import of this encounter.⁷⁶

This argument actually undermines Carlson's thesis, because it takes no account of the fact that the social world in which the nocturnal instruction occurs is first-century Palestine. If the sentence καὶ ἔμεινε σὺν αὐτῷ τὴν νύκτα ἐκείνην is not a euphemism in Greek and would imply nothing sexual within the social world represented in this text, then there can be no justification for rendering this sentence as a sexual euphemism. It helps little to complain that Smith's translation is "wooden" and to point out that Smith advocated "idiomatic renderings."⁷⁷

⁷³ Cyril C. Richardson, review of *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark*, in *Theological Studies* 35 (1974) 571–75, at 575.

⁷⁴ Smith, *Clement*, 121–22.

⁷⁵ This suggestion appears three times in comments Smith wrote in 1989 while critiquing an early draft of John Dart's book *Decoding Mark* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2003), which Dart retained and allowed me to examine.

⁷⁶ Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 66–67, 68–69.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.

What Smith advocated is idiomatic parity: if a phrase has an idiomatic meaning within the vernacular employed by the author, then it should receive a comparable idiomatic rendering in translation.⁷⁸ It is precisely because the words ἔμεινε σὺν αὐτῷ τὴν νύκτα ἐκείνην do not constitute a sexual euphemism in koine Greek that the unidiomatic translation “remained with him that night” is appropriate in LGM 1:12.

Ultimately, this compendium of arguments is meant to prove that LGM 1 reflects a particular life setting within 1950s America:

The description in *Secret Mark* of the young man’s clothing (“wearing a linen cloth over his naked body”) uses the same language found in Mark 14:51–52 to describe the youth who fled from Gethsemane when Jesus was arrested, a textual link that implies that both young men came to Jesus seeking the same thing (an inference Smith drew in *Clement* 177; *Secret Gospel* 81). The sexually charged climax of *Secret Mark* means that what these young men were seeking was, to use the words of the New York statute, “a crime against nature or other lewdness.” In other words, *Secret Mark* easily conjures up to the twentieth-century reader the image that Jesus was arrested for soliciting a homoerotic encounter in a public garden. An ancient reader of *Secret Mark*, on the other hand, would not have recognized the public solicitation offence because it did not exist in Clement’s day.⁷⁹

Since none of Carlson’s arguments in support of reading LGM 1 as a “sexually charged” homosexual encounter bears scrutiny, this attempt to assign longer Mark to “a specific moment within a changing twentieth-century legal landscape that peaked in the 1950s” cannot be any more compelling.⁸⁰ In fact, it is remarkably less compelling, for it is predicated on a patently false statement about what “*Secret Mark* easily conjures up to the twentieth-century reader.” Among the hundreds of twentieth-century discussions of “secret” Mark that exist in print and on the internet, I have yet to come across the observation that LGM 1 implies that “Jesus was arrested for soliciting a homoerotic encounter in a public garden.” There are two good reasons actual readers of longer Mark (or, more accurately, of canonical Mark supplemented with LGM 1 and 2) do not make this inference. First, this gospel is set in first-century Palestine and not twentieth-century America. A man who lived two thousand years ago in another part of the world cannot be busted by the NYPD vice squad on charges of public lewdness. Second, Mark made it perfectly clear that Jesus was arrested because Judas betrayed him to members of the Sanhedrin and that Jesus was tried on false allegations of threatening the temple. His arrest by “a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders” is in no way connected with the young man who suddenly appears as Jesus

⁷⁸ Morton Smith, “Notes on Goodspeed’s ‘Problems of New Testament Translation,’” *JBL* 64 (1945) 501–14, esp. 511–13.

⁷⁹ Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 70.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 70–71.

is being led away. These constraints upon the reading process prevent real readers from imagining the scenario that Carlson claims it naturally evokes.

The only support that Carlson can muster for this implausible reading of Mark 14:51–52 is Smith's "inference" "that both young men came to Jesus seeking the same thing (*Clement* 177; *Secret Gospel* 81)." This comment appears to imply that Smith read 14:51–52 as intimating a homosexual encounter. What Smith actually stated in those two books is that "this youth, too, had come to be baptized": "The business in hand was a baptism; the youth wore the required costume. The time — night — agrees with the story in the secret gospel; the place — beside a stream in a lonely garden — is suitable."⁸¹ In other words, Smith fit this pericope within his theory that Jesus offered a mystery-cult rite called the mystery of the kingdom of God, whereby the initiate united with his spirit and ascended by hallucination to God's heavenly kingdom, where he *or she* was freed from the obligation to keep the Torah.⁸² Smith's notorious *speculation* about physical symbolism of spiritual union being a conceivable (reread the last word) element in this baptism was limited to two brief comments that he made in *Clement* and *Secret Gospel*.⁸³ When Smith raised the specter of homosexuality in connection with the naked flight of the young man in Gethsemane, it was always as a foil to make his baptismal explanation appear more plausible. Specifically, in his replies to Reginald Fuller, Frans Neirynck, and Frank Kermode, he argued that the information about the naked flight of a young man during Jesus' arrest is historically reliable because it is too "embarrassing" and unedifying to have been invented by Christians (as a tradition, it has no apparent *Sitz im Leben*). Although this detail "is apt to elicit a snigger from the modern reader" (i.e., "Holy man arrested . . . naked youth escapes"), it must have meant something very different to the evangelist Mark or he would not have included it. Given the facts that some mystery and magical initiations included a linen sheet worn over the naked body and that such a sheet eventually became the Christian baptismal garment, Mark (and the tradents before him) probably believed that the young man was dressed for baptism.⁸⁴ In other words, Smith *rejected* a gay read-

⁸¹ Cf. Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978) 138. In this book Smith refrained from describing this hypothetical ritual as a baptism; he suggested, more cautiously, that "it is . . . possible that 'the mystery of the kingdom' was a magical rite, by which initiates were made to believe that they had entered the kingdom and so escaped from the realm of Mosaic Law" (135).

⁸² Smith noted in the margin on p. 244 of his personal copy of *Clement* that the women who experienced the first resurrection appearances must have been initiated into this mystery because "these resurrection visions were reflexes of the initiation experience."

⁸³ Smith, *Clement*, 251; *Secret Gospel*, 114.

⁸⁴ The fullest statement is Morton Smith, "Under the Sheet," *The New York Review of Books* 26 (8 February 1979), <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/7916>. The same argument, in a truncated form, appears in Smith, response to Reginald Fuller, in *Longer Mark: Forgery, Interpolation, or Old Tradition?* (ed. Wilhelm H. Wuellner; Protocol of the Eighteenth Colloquy: 7 December 1975; Berkeley: Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture, 1976) 13–14; and

ing of Mark 14:51–52 as incapable of explaining the preservation of this incident in a canonical gospel.

■ Exhibit Five: Smith's Seal of Authorship

Argument: Unfortunately for Carlson, the last of his arguments connecting the *Letter to Theodore* to Morton Smith flows from the previous one. Carlson claims that Smith placed his own seal of authorship (*sphragis*) on the *Letter to Theodore*:

The sexual innuendo that made *Secret Mark* such an interesting and potentially momentous find is now part of what identifies it as a modern fake, but it also does more than that—it is also Morton Smith's own *sphragis* that declares his authorship by alluding to his previous works. The climax of the nocturnal initiation of *Secret Mark* contains a juxtaposition of Mark 4:11 and a sexual practice forbidden in Jewish law (Lev 18:22, 20:13) and is embedded in a letter by Clement of Alexandria exhorting secrecy. These elements had already been connected to each other in Smith's publications before the summer of 1958.⁸⁵

The statements in question appear in Smith's 1951 book *Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospels*, which is a revised form of his 1948 dissertation, and a paper titled "The Image of God," which was published "in March of 1958, . . . right before he returned to Mar Saba."⁸⁶ The former mentions Mark 4:11–12 in a paragraph that also mentions *t. Hag.* 2.1; the latter cites in a footnote a passage from Clement's *Stromateis* as a point of comparison to the rabbinic secrecy concerning Ezekiel's vision of the throne of God, which is mentioned in *t. Hag.* 2.1 and its parallels.

Why is this significant? According to Carlson, *t. Hag.* 2.1 mentions "forbidden sexual relationships," which is what "the mystery of the kingdom of God" denotes in longer Mark. This connection proves that Smith knew about the sexual nature of the mystery of the kingdom of God and linked it with Clement's secrecy before he discovered this text.⁸⁷

Assessment: Clearly the key to this argument is the claim that both *t. Hag.* 2.1 and LGM 1:12 are about forbidden sexual relations and that Smith intended to draw this connection in his dissertation; otherwise, the former passage just happens to be something Smith mentioned once in the same context as Mark 4:11–12, and again, some years later, in the same context in which he mentioned Clement's reluctance to put secret teachings in writing. I have argued at length elsewhere that LGM 1:12 is not about gay sex.⁸⁸ What I intend to show here is that the "connection" between *t. Hag.* 2.1 and Mark 4:11–12 in Smith's dissertation has nothing to do with forbid-

Morton Smith, "Clement of Alexandria and Secret Mark: The Score at the End of the First Decade," *Harvard Theological Review* [HTR] 75 (1982) 458 n. 19.

⁸⁵ Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 71.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Brown, "Question of Motive," 353–73.

den sexual relationships and that Smith's interpretation of Mark 4:11–12 was in no sense sexual prior to 1958.

Let us look at the passage from Smith's dissertation:

Further I think the passage in Sifre on Deut. to have been based on the fact that an important part of primitive Christianity was a secret doctrine which was revealed only to trusted members. Such a doctrine is suggested by the words put in the mouth of Jesus, speaking to his disciples: "To you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to those outside all things are in parables, that they may surely see and not perceive," etc. And Paul himself wrote in 1 Cor. 2:1–6 "And I, coming to you, brethren, came not proclaiming the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom . . . that your faith might not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. But we speak wisdom among the perfect, and a wisdom not of this age . . . but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery." A similar distinction was recognized by the Tanna'im between material suitable for public teaching and that reserved for secret teaching, as we learn from *Hagigah* T 2.1 (233): "The (passages of the Old Testament dealing with) forbidden sexual relationships are not to be expounded to three (at a time,) but may be expounded to two; and the account of creation not to two, but it may be expounded to a single hearer; and (Ezekiel's vision of) the chariot may not be expounded to a single hearer unless he be learned in the Law and of good understanding."⁸⁹

As Smith explicitly indicated, the point at issue in this paragraph is the fact that both the Christians and the Tanna'im drew a distinction between exoteric and esoteric teaching. What those subjects consisted of does not matter here. Smith was simply describing "parallels with a fixed difference," as the title of this chapter of his book indicates. Carlson's quotation of this paragraph ends before the reference to the account of creation and the vision of the chariot (i.e., the throne of God), which would have put the reference to the Levitical laws about "forbidden sexual relationships" (incest, intercourse during menstruation, adultery, male homosexuality, and bestiality) in a different light. As Joachim Jeremias explained, these passages from the Jewish scriptures concern "the deepest secrets of the divine being," such as "theosophy and cosmogony," which must be apprehended with "great respect."⁹⁰ Jeremias made the same point years earlier in his book *Die Abendmahlsworte Jesu*, where he discussed *t. Hag.* 2.1 as evidence of the esotericism of the scribes and cited 1 Cor 2:6–3:2, the concept of "those outside" (οἱ ἔξω) and "the mystery of the kingdom of God" from Mark 4:11–12, and other New Testament passages as points of comparison.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Smith, *Tannaitic Parallels*, 155–56.

⁹⁰ Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period* (trans. F. H. and C. H. Cave; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969; repr. London: SCM, 1976; trans. of *Jerusalem zur Zeit Jesu. Kulturgeschichtliche Untersuchung zur neutestamentlichen Zeitgeschichte* [Leipzig: E. Pfeiffer, 1923]) 237–38.

⁹¹ Joachim Jeremias, *Die Abendmahlsworte Jesu* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1935) 51, 53–54.

Carlson's attempt to associate Smith's reference to "the mystery of the kingdom of God" in *Tannaitic Parallels* with forbidden sexual relations makes nonsense of the fact that in the same book Smith associated possession of this mystery with increased virtue. Smith cited Mark 4:11–12 as an example of "the rather interesting theory, not found in all systems of moral theology, that God helps the good to become better and the bad worse. The latter element of this theory is expressed in the Gospels . . . by . . . [the words] 'To those who are outside all things are in parables, in order that they may surely look and not see, and may surely hear and not understand, lest they should turn back and be forgiven,' and 'in [Tannaitic literature] . . . by the rule 'That the virtuous are caused to perform acts of virtue, and sinners acts of sin.'"⁹² The logic of Smith's interpretation indicates that it is "those outside" who are made to sin, not the insiders to whom the mystery of the kingdom of God is given. God helps them to perform his will (i.e., the Law).

When Smith wrote *Tannaitic Parallels*, he viewed the whole of Mark 4:11–12 as a Christian invention, as the words Carlson quoted suggest: "Such a doctrine is suggested by *the words put in the mouth of Jesus*, speaking to his disciples: 'To you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to those outside. . . .'"⁹³ Smith's rationale for dissociating this saying from the historical Jesus is apparent in Smith's 1955 article on Vincent Taylor's commentary on Mark:

Mk. 4.11–12 is probably an answer to Jewish polemic. The Jews are saying, "Jesus was not the Messiah, because if he had been he would have been recognized by our scholars. He was heard and rejected." The Christian answer is, "They never heard his true teaching. He revealed the mysteries [*sic*, pl.] of the Kingdom only to his disciples; for outsiders he had only parables. Thus he fulfilled God's command [in Isa 6:9–10] to prevent the Jews from believing."⁹⁴

In both this article and *Tannaitic Parallels*, Smith interpreted Mark 4:11 in light of 4:12. He was highly critical of "T[aylor]'s attempt to escape the obvious meaning" of this saying by proposing that "the 'parables' originally meant riddles and the statement as a whole meant, 'In spite of all I do to make myself clear, it's Greek to them.'"⁹⁵ This explanation struck Smith as an apologetic attempt to neutralize Mark's image of Jesus deliberately preventing his fellow Jews from believing in him and being saved.⁹⁶ Smith's own critique of Taylor's position became problematic after he adopted Cyril C. Richardson's hypothesis that LGM 1:10–12 depicted a

⁹² Smith, *Tannaitic Parallels*, 136.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 156 (emphasis added).

⁹⁴ Morton Smith, "Comments on Taylor's Commentary on Mark," *HTR* 48 (1955) 29–30.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 31, 30.

⁹⁶ Compare his remarks in Morton Smith, "Aramaic Studies and the Study of the New Testament," *Journal of Bible and Religion* 26 (1958) 312 n. 24: "The efforts of [C.] Torrey and [M.] Black to get rid of *hina* in Mk. 4.11 f. are obviously worthless apologetics; let them serve as examples of many similar attempts."

baptism and decided that the phrase “the mystery of the kingdom of God” denoted a baptismal mystery initiation.⁹⁷ Thus in *Clement* Smith made a silent about-face and approved the position of Taylor (and Jeremias before him) that Mark 4:11–12 was “an old logion” that originally referred not to parables but to the idea that for outsiders “everything is puzzling.”⁹⁸ This reversal allowed Smith to sever the mystery of the kingdom of God from its literary context, wherein it denotes a secret doctrine hidden in the parables, and to interpret it as a rite that the historical Jesus gave to his disciples.

The fact that prior to 1958 Smith associated possession of the mystery of the kingdom of God with moral improvement and viewed Mark 4:11–12 as a polemical Christian invention intended to defend Jesus’ messiahship negates Carlson’s simplistic position that Smith “connected” the mystery of the kingdom of God with forbidden sexual relations because the two ideas appear in the same paragraph. Like Jeremias before him, Smith cited Mark 4:11–12 as a salient example of “the fact that an important part of primitive Christianity was a secret doctrine which was revealed only to trusted members.”

As for Smith’s mentioning of *t. Hag.* 2.1 and Clement’s *Stromateis* in two consecutive footnotes in an article published a few months before he returned to Mar Saba, it is hard to see any veiled significance to this fact. The proximity of this publication to Smith’s stay in Mar Saba is coincidental. Carlson’s statement that “Smith revisited this Talmudic passage right before he returned to Mar Saba”⁹⁹ requires his reader to overlook the process of peer review, the queue for accepted articles, and Smith’s statement in the first footnote that this article was based on three lectures he gave at the Hebrew Teachers’ College, Boston, in 1955.¹⁰⁰ The sequence of footnotes citing *Hagigah* and Clement is no more suspicious than the timing of the article’s publication. Again, Smith was discussing secret doctrines, and Clement is the most obvious Christian example of the widespread philosophical attitude that the most profound doctrines should not be put in writing.¹⁰¹

It is upon the tree of life that God rests when he comes to the Garden of Eden—on this rabbinic, pseudepigraphic, Christian and magical texts agree. This legend, plus the fact that the tree of life is the symbol of the saint, enables us to understand the cryptic saying of Resh Laqish, “The patriarchs,

⁹⁷ See Smith, *Secret Gospel*, 64–69.

⁹⁸ Smith, *Clement*, 178.

⁹⁹ Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 72.

¹⁰⁰ Morton Smith, “The Image of God: Notes on the Hellenization of Judaism, with Especial Reference to Goodenough’s Work on Jewish Symbols,” in *Studies in Historical Method, Ancient Israel, Ancient Judaism* (vol. 1 of *Studies in the Cult of Yahweh*; ed. Shaye J. D. Cohen; Leiden: Brill, 1996) 116–49. Originally published in *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 40 (1958) 473–512. Apart from postpublication additions by Smith that appear in brackets in Cohen’s reprint of this article, the most recent publications cited by Smith are items from 1956; see nn. 37, 119, 164, 169.

¹⁰¹ Smith, “Image of God,” 144–45.

they are the throne of God." We should not expect this doctrine to be developed in the preserved rabbinic material, since the teaching about the throne of God is specified as that to be kept most secret of all,* and quite possibly was not committed to writing.** However, the saying has an almost exact parallel in the common Christian expression, *theophoroi pateres*, of which the active and passive senses are not to be separated.

The relevant footnotes read:

* Hagigah 2.1 and parallels.

** Cf. Clement of Alexandria, Strom. 1.1.13–14 etc.

Notice that, contrary to Carlson's introduction to this passage, Smith did not link Clement with both Mark 4:11 and *t. Hag. 2.1* in this passage.¹⁰² Smith said nothing here of Mark 4:11 and simply compared the rabbinic secrecy about the doctrine of the throne of God with Clement's secrecy. Smith did not even mention the Levitical laws concerning forbidden sexual relationships when describing *t. Hag. 2.1*, since the only part of that passage that concerned him was its reference to secrecy in connection with Ezekiel's vision of the throne of God. Indeed, the throne imagery and its connection with Tannaitic esotericism is the only real overlap between the paragraph from *Tannaitic Parallels* and the paragraph from "The Image of God."

Carlson's discovery that Smith possessed "the crucial linkage between Mark's mystery of the kingdom of God, forbidden sexual practices, and Clement of Alexandria's discussion of secrecy" before going to Mar Saba in 1958 is yet another figment of his imagination.¹⁰³ Longer Mark does not depict homosexual sex; Smith did not connect the mystery of the kingdom of God with homosexuality or any other "forbidden sexual practices" before he discovered the manuscript; and he did not connect this mystery or homosexuality with Clement's reluctance to put certain doctrines in writing.¹⁰⁴

■ Conclusion

According to *The Gospel Hoax*, Morton Smith invented "secret" Mark as a hoax in the 1950s in order to suggest that the authorities who were clamping down on gay sex in public parks were "crucifying Jesus Christ all over again" but then spent

¹⁰² Carlson wrote: "If Smith's linkage of Mark 4:11 with forbidden sexual relationships in *T. Hag. 2.1* in 1951 and *Secret Mark's* coupling of Mark 4:11 with a forbidden sexual relationship are to be considered merely a lucky coincidence, Smith's prior knowledge of linking [*sic*] Clement of Alexandria to these [i.e., *both*] passages would be harder to explain away, since Smith barely mentioned Clement before 1958. However, in an article published in March of 1958, Smith revisited this Talmudic passage right before he returned to Mar Saba" (*Gospel Hoax*, 72).

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁰⁴ Carlson's reference to "a letter by Clement of Alexandria exhorting secrecy" (*Ibid.*, 71) repeats a pervasive misconception about the *Letter to Theodore* 2.10–12 that I had corrected in *Mark's Other Gospel*, 30.

years researching his own hoax and developing a different, scholarly interpretation so that he could distract people from its true meaning and thereby successfully dupe his colleagues, using this text as a private test of their competence.¹⁰⁵ It is little wonder that Carlson devotes one paragraph to Smith's eighty-three-page analysis of the historical background to the initiation story¹⁰⁶ and skirts the fact that Smith defended the various components of this theory in numerous articles from 1967 until his death in 1991.¹⁰⁷ Carlson's tale of "Morton Smith's Invention of *Secret Mark*" is bizarre and illogical and has no credible support. The confession of M. Madiotes the bald swindler, the anomalous letterforms that agree with Smith's handwriting, the anachronistic allusion to Morton Salt, the veiled confession of the goldsmith who is confounded by his own idol, the gay life setting in 1950s American parks, and Smith's seal of authorship are mere chimeras, specious attempts at squaring the facts about "secret" Mark with the academic folklore about Morton Smith.

¹⁰⁵ Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 85, 80–81, 78.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 11–12.

¹⁰⁷ On the element of freedom from the law, see Morton Smith, "Jesus' Attitude towards the Law," in *Papers of the Fourth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (ed. World Congress of Jewish Studies; Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1967) 1:241–44; *idem*, "The Reason for the Persecution of Paul and the Obscurity of Acts," in *Studies in Mysticism and Religion Presented to G. G. Scholem on His Seventieth Birthday* (ed. E. E. Urbach, R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, and C. Wirszubski; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1967) 261–68; *idem*, "Early Christianity and Judaism," in *Great Confrontations in Jewish History: The J. M. Goodstein Lecture Series on Judaica, 1975* (ed. Stanley Wagner and Allen Breck; Denver: University of Denver, Dept. of History, 1977) 41–61, esp. 47–53. On the element of ascent to the heavens, see Morton Smith, "The Origin and History of the Transfiguration Story," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 36 (1980) 39–44; *idem*, "Ascent to the Heavens and the Beginning of Christianity," *Eranos* 50 (1981) 403–29; *idem*, "Two Ascended to Heaven—Jesus and the Author of 4Q491," in *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1992) 290–301. On the significance of the linen sheet, see Morton Smith, "In Quest of Jesus," a reply to "The Quest for the Magical Jesus" by Frank Kermode, *The New York Review of Books* 25 (21 December 1978); *idem*, "Under the Sheet." Many of these papers are among Smith's best works and therefore were reprinted in *idem*, *New Testament, Early Christianity, and Magic* (vol. 2 of *Studies in the Cult of Yahweh*; ed. Shaye J. D. Cohen; Leiden: Brill, 1996). Several are discussed in my paper "Question of Motive."

Thy Word In Me: On the Prayer of Union in St. Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle**

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But I know that it can only be gained by abandoning everything.
— St. Teresa of Avila

When Michel de Certeau writes, “[i]t is ways of acting that guide the creation of a body of mystical writings,” he asserts the corporeal authority inherent in a language that speaks an ab-solute (un-bound) “only by erasing itself.”¹ This essay seeks to extend de Certeau’s correspondence between “ways of acting” and the “creation of a body of mystical writings” by mining the correlation of act and word in St.

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¹ Michel de Certeau, “Mystic Speech” in *Heterologies, Discourse on the Other* (trans. Brian Massumi; *Theory and History of Literature* 17; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995) 80–100, at 81. De Certeau elaborates a view of sixteenth and seventeenth century mysticism in Europe as being “characterized by a set of procedures allowing a new treatment of language—of all contemporary language, not only the area delimited by theological knowledge or the corpus of patristic and scriptural works.” Studying the “field of mysticism at the height of its formalization—from Saint Teresa (1515–1582) to Angelus Silesius (the pseudonym of Johann Scheffler, 1624–1677),” because “its modes of functioning are more legible, allowing us to define its *place*” (ibid., 81), de Certeau offers a historical and linguistic examination of this luminous form of Christianity through its literature—writings which, he suggests, reinterpreted the Christian tradition “against the backdrop of decadence and ‘corruption’ in a world falling apart and in need of repair” (ibid., 80). Following de Certeau’s emphasis on language, my essay approaches segments of St. Teresa’s *Interior Castle*

Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle* (*Moradas del Castillo interior*),² as it bears witness to the formation of human subjectivity as a Christological phenomenon.³ Of primary concern is a particular way of acting—the act of contemplative prayer—its intercession and its representation in language, which will allow significant parallels among the word, the act of prayer, and the formation of the human as subject to be illuminated. Interpreting images of interiority found in the Prayer of Union in the second chapter of the Fifth Dwellings,⁴ this essay centers upon St. Teresa's

(1577) through an aesthetic and theological lens, in dialogue with his thought in "Mystic Speech." Given these parameters, the essay does not represent an exhaustive study of the Teresian corpus and its extensive secondary literature, or a comprehensive view of Teresa's theology across her *œuvre*. It does, however, offer an in-depth reading of select passages of her spiritual masterpiece, which are exemplary of her mature thought and Christology. Throughout the essay, I note relation to earlier works by St. Teresa and contemporary Teresian scholarship, in order to extend and contextualize her thought and my own, and for the reader's further reference. For an incisive introduction to, and analysis of, Michel de Certeau's corpus see Arthur Bradley, "Certeau's 'Yes, in a foreign land,'" in *Negative Theology and Modern French Philosophy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004); and Wlad Godzich, "The Further Possibility of Knowledge," introduction to *Heterologies, Discourse on the Other*, by Michel de Certeau (trans. Brian Massumi; Theory and History of Literature 17; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995) vii–xxi. For de Certeau's comprehensive study of sixteenth and seventeenth century mysticism (in which "Mystic Speech" serves as an introduction) see *The Mystic Fable* (trans. Michael B. Smith; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992; trans. of *La Fable Mystique* [Paris: Gallimard, 1982]). For critical and sympathetic companions to the life, theology and writings of St. Teresa see Rowan Williams, *Teresa of Avila* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1991); E. W. Trueman Dicken, *The Crucible of Love: A Study of the Mysticism of St. Teresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963); Gillian T. W. Ahlgren, *Entering Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle: A Reader's Companion* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 2005). All biblical citations in this essay are drawn from the NRSV.

² St. Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle* (ed. and trans. E. Allison Peers; New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1961). I chose to work with the Peers translation: though older and based on the P. Silverio edition (*Obras de s. Teresa de Jesús* [ed. Silverio of Saint Teresa; 9 vols.; Biblioteca mistica carmelitana 1-9; Burgos: Tip. de "El Monte Carmelo," 1915–1924], it sustains a particular aesthetic and theological clarity in the English. I have used the Kavanaugh and Rodriguez translation (*The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila* [trans. Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D., and Otilio Rodriguez, O.C.D.; Washington, D.C.: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1980])—from the more recent edition of the complete works prepared by Fr. Tomás de la Cruz (Alvarez) (*Obras* [ed. Tomás de la Cruz; Archivo silveriano de historia y espiritualidad carmelitana 1; Burgos: Editorial El Monte Carmelo, 1971]), and which Rowan Williams characterizes as "preferable to Peers in terms of liveliness and readability" (*Teresa of Avila* [London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1991] xi)—as a secondary reference. I include its helpful paragraph divisions in parentheses following each Peers citation.

³ I understand the formation of the human as subject as a Christological event, for which St. Teresa's "Prayer of Union" offers generous representation. I intend a theological and aesthetic approach to St. Teresa's text, one that is both interpretive and constructive, and focusing on the Christological import of her poetic imagery. A sustained treatment of Christology and the formation of human subjectivity, crossing patristics, aesthetics, and continental phenomenology is currently in progress in my doctoral dissertation.

⁴ I translate "moradas" as "Dwellings" in order to recall the existential temporality of prayer and its interiority. In this light, I emphasize the *inter* of interiority as a site of intercession (Lat. *intercessio*, "an intervention, a becoming surety;" ptc. of *intercedere*, "to intercede"). Interiority and intercession are here characterized by both mediation and interruption, a being situated

language for the soul's incipient union with God,⁵ and, in particular, on her analogy of the life of a silkworm and its internal processes of transformation. Three coalescent and exemplary aspects of Christology will be shown to reside in this analogy, imbricated within the theology and poesis of St. Teresa's text: Christ "made known in two natures without confusion, without change, without division, without separation, with the difference of the natures not at all removed for the sake of the union;"⁶ Christ Jesus' incarnational self-emptying inscribed in Phil 2:5–8;

between, as a threshold, with a view toward reconciling/interceding perceived opposites. Peers comments that the Spanish "moradas" is derived from the intransitive verb "morar," "to dwell," and is not absolutely identical in sense with his choice of "Mansions." Although "mansions" does yield a strong sense of capaciousness, it becomes a somewhat static architectural trope in contrast to the active, present sense of "Dwellings," a choice which concurs with Richard Perceval's (1550–1620) translation of "morada" as "a lodging, a dwelling, a place" (*A Dictionary in Spanish and English* [London: John Haviland for Edward Blount, 1623] 172; online: http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.82003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:25568:87). In modern usage "morada" has the multiple meanings of "abode, habitation, dwelling mansion, stay, sojourn" (*Cassell's Spanish Dictionary* [New York: Macmillan, 1978] 428). Kavanaugh and Rodriquez translate "moradas" as "Dwelling Places."

⁵ St. Teresa's Prayer of Union in the Fifth Dwellings represents the first union "of the whole soul with God" (IC 102; [5.1.11]). It is characterized by a full alignment of the soul's will to God's will and is differentiated from the partial union of earlier Dwellings, the intense or ecstatic union that it precedes (spiritual betrothal; Sixth Dwellings), and the perfect, complete or transforming union (spiritual marriage; Seventh Dwellings). The Prayer of Union may also be seen to correspond to aspects of both the third and the fourth degrees of prayer in the Life, chs. 16–17, 18–21 (*St. Teresa of Avila The Life of Teresa of Jesus: The Autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila* [ed. and trans. E. Allison Peers; Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1960]), though St. Teresa's analogy of the Four Waters in the Life and that of the Seven Dwellings in the Interior Castle teach two resonant yet distinct paths to prayerful union. Fr. Ermanno, O.D.C. writes of the Prayer of Union as "simple" and "infused," correlating it to the Fourth Water in the Life (in contrast to Peers who aligns it with the Third Water) and to ch. 33 of the Way of Perfection (*The Way of Perfection* [ed. and trans. E. Allison Peers; Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1964]). He distinguishes it from the prayer of quiet, describing it as "so deep that it totally absorbs the interior faculties of the soul, which begins to experience a transformation within itself which causes it to live a divine life" ("The Degrees of Teresian Prayer," in *St. Teresa of Avila: Studies in her Life, Doctrine and Times* [ed. Fr. Thomas, O.D.C., and Fr. Gabriel, O.D.C.; Dublin: Clonmore and Reynolds Ltd., 1963] 77–103, at 93. This aspect of beginning is critical to my understanding of the Prayer of Union, as it affords view into the beginning of creation and the birth of the soul created in the image of God. See also Fr. Laurian O.D.C., "The Doctrine of St. Teresa on Spiritual Betrothal," in *ibid.*, 154–90.

⁶ "ἐν δύο φύσεσιν ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαίρετως, ἀχωρίστως γνωριζόμενον, οὐδαμοῦ τῆς τῶν φύσεων διαφορᾶς ἀνηρημένης διὰ τὴν ἕνωσιν" (Definition of Chalcedon [451 C.E.]). Alternative translations: "acknowledged in two natures which undergo no confusion, no change, no division, no separation; at no point was the difference between the natures taken away through the union" (*Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* [ed. Norman P. Tanner, S. J.; Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990] 1:86); "to be acknowledged in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way abolished because of the union" (John Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought* [2d ed.; Crestwood, N. Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1987] 26); "that we apprehend [*gnōridzomenon*] this one and only Christ-Son, Lord, only-begotten—in two natures [*duo physēs*]; [and we do this] without confusing the two natures [*asunkutōs*], without transmuting one nature into the other

and Christ as transformative crucible, reconciling perceived opposites (see John 3:6 spirit/flesh; Gal 2:19–20 self/other; Phil 3:10 death/resurrection; Col 3:11, Gal 3:27–28 slave/free, male/female). Particular attention will be given to the dialectic intrinsic to all three aspects—a dialectic notably present in the Chalcedonian affirmation of both difference and union “coming together in one person (πρόσωπον) and one hypostasis.”⁷ The dynamic analogy of the silkworm’s metamorphosis, I suggest, linguistically re-presents, in various and repeated fashion, this dialectic of difference and union in Christ. As this essay unfolds, St. Teresa’s incarnational trope will open a view into the formation of the human subject as a Christological event, a double and dialectical event that reiterates and reinscribes the act of creation in God’s image and through God’s word (Gen 1:1–3, 26–27; John 1:1).

Throughout the essay, the act of contemplative prayer will be held as a form of utterance, one that intercedes,⁸ speaking an originary act of creation within the human subject. The soul’s proemial union with God in the Fifth Dwellings offers distinct representation for the dialectical nature of this act of creation—an act that may be envisioned here as a doubleness or split within the soul and, thus, within the human subject.⁹ St. Teresa’s Prayer of Union provides lucid testimony to the

[*atreptōs*], without dividing them into two separate categories [*adiaretōs*], without contrasting them according to area or function [*achoristōs*]. The distinctiveness of each nature is not nullified by the union” (*Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine, From the Bible to the Present* [ed. John H. Leith; 3d ed.; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1982] 36).

⁷ “καὶ εἰς ἓν πρόσωπον καὶ μίαν ὑπόστασιν συντρεχούσης” (Definition of Chalcedon). One may also read “concurring in a single person” with “hypostasis” translated as “subsistence” or “a single subsistent being.”

⁸ See above, n. 4, on “*inter*” and below, n. 89.

⁹ This split within the human as subject may be viewed through theological and psychoanalytic lenses. Jacques Lacan’s theory of the splitting of the subject is a resource for my thought, though my emphasis on the Christological nature of the formation of human subjectivity admits both the value and the limitations of Lacanian theory for theological inquiry. The Lacanian “subject” (always an open term, not closed, fixed or fully achieved) comes to itself in and through language; entry into the domain of symbolic discourse marks the splitting of the subject and the advent of desire, continually deferred. Significantly, Lacan views the rise of self-consciousness as a reformulation of the mirror stage; see below, n. 30. See Lacan, “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience,” in *Écrits* (trans. Alan Sheridan; New York, N.Y.: W. W. Norton, 1977) 1–7. See also “The Split between the Eye and the Gaze” in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis* (ed. Jacques-Alain Miller; trans. Alan Sheridan [New York, N.Y.: W. W. Norton & Company, 1978]) 67–78; Bruce Fink, *Lacan to the Letter: Reading Écrits Closely* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004) 108. For varied introductions to Lacan’s work and influence, see also Bruce Fink, *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995); Malcolm Bowie, *Lacan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991); Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the École Freudienne* (London: Macmillan, 1982); Elizabeth Grosz, *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction* (New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 1990); Graham Ward, *Theology and Contemporary Critical Theory* (New York, N.Y.: St. Martin’s Press, 1996) esp. 30–34; *Lacan & Theological Discourse* (ed. Edith Wyschogrod, David Crownfield, and Carl A. Raschke; Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989). For a comparative theological understanding of “the problem of the division in the soul” see Edward Howells, *John of the Cross and Teresa of*

Christological nature of this doubleness or split within the subject—a rupture that is rendered visible in language, written and reconciled within a corporeal and dialogical frame—“*thy Word, in me.*”¹⁰ Echoing St. Paul’s affirmation in Gal 2:20—“it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me,”—this essential utterance will be understood here in a Christological sense, as representative of a union which is also a division or limen within the human prayer—a subjectivity cleaved in and by the Word,¹¹ the Word that “was in the beginning with God” (John 1:2). The soul’s union with God in St. Teresa’s Prayer of Union offers representation for this cleavage of subjectivity as an ambivalent event, a *coincidentia oppositorum* signifying both a union with, and a separation from, God.¹² Beginning with St. Teresa’s description of the image of the interior castle found in the First Dwellings, I then turn to her exposition on the certainty of the soul (chapter 1, Fifth Dwellings) before moving to the Prayer of Union in chapter 2 of the Fifth Dwellings. It is within the language of the Prayer of Union that the significance

Avila: Mystical Knowing and Selfhood (New York, N.Y.: Crossroad, 2002). Howells addresses the problem as “the ontological division between the soul and God” which “enters into the soul, dividing the two parts—not to the same degree that the soul and God are naturally divided, but enough to dislocate the soul severely.” He traces this division to the Pauline distinction between the spirit and the flesh, and proposes its Trinitarian solution in the final union of the soul with God (*ibid.*, 2–4). See also Ahlgren’s integrated analysis of Howells’ thought throughout *Entering Teresa*, and specifically on the issue of division at 73 n. 19.

¹⁰ Michel de Certeau, “Mystic Speech,” 89. De Certeau conceives this phrase, “*thy Word, in me*” from his reading of a couplet by Angelus Silesius/Johann Scheffler: “Die Schrift ist Schrift, sonst nichts. Mein Trost/ist Wesenheit, /Und das Gott in mir spricht das Wort der Ewigkeit” (“The (Divine) Writing is writing, nothing more. My consolation is essentiality, and that God speaks in me the Word of Eternity,” “Mystic Speech,” 89 n. 40). For a French translation of this couplet, see *Le pèlerin chérubique* (trans. Eugène Susini; Publications de la Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines de Paris: Textes et documents 4–5; Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1964) 170. De Certeau writes of the mystic’s need “to restore a *dialogue*” to a world ruptured by ambiguity and plurality (*ibid.*, 88): “In the work of Angelus Silesius, this corresponds to the “‘invocating drive’ which casts aside the opaque positivity of the Holy Writ as a ‘nothing’, and reclaims the ‘essential’—*thy Word, in me*” (*ibid.*, 89). While this essential utterance has multiple significance, it may be read in light of the Lacanian split subject, in that it represents the division or interruption of speech, which separates the subject of the enunciation from the subject of the statement. I refer here to the splitting of an utterance into a positionality and a propositionality as Emile Benveniste elucidates in “The Nature of the Linguistic Sign,” *Problems in General Linguistics* (trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek; Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1971) 43–48.

¹¹ The word “to cleave” has both a transitive meaning, “to part or divide by force, to split or rive,” and an intransitive meaning, “to adhere closely, to hold fast, to cling.” I intend to hold both meanings at once, such that one grasps the ambivalent (and, I offer, Christological) significance of the soul’s simultaneous union with, and separation from, God. In this sense, the word “cleave” may perform, linguistically, a homonymic coincidence of opposites. See *Webster’s International Dictionary of the English Language* (Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam and Sons, 1909) 264.

¹² I use *coincidentia oppositorum* here to denote two apparently opposite events, e.g., union and separation, occurring at once in the soul, and understand this coincidence Christologically. Although the idea of a coincidence of opposites is variously inscribed throughout the Christian contemplative tradition—e.g., in Gregory of Nyssa’s “seeing that consists in not seeing” (*The Life of Moses* 2.163;

of St. Teresa's metaphor of the silkworm comes into clear view, with particular regard for a Christological understanding of that apophatic utterance which calls, cleaves, and constitutes the human as subject.¹³

■ An Essential Interiority

At the very outset of *Interior Castle*, St. Teresa of Avila envisions a crystalline castle as an analogy for the human soul in the context of inspired prayer: "While beseeching Our Lord to-day that He would speak through me," she begins, "... I began to think of the soul as if it were a castle made of a single diamond or of very clear crystal, in which there are many rooms, just as in Heaven there are many mansions."¹⁴ Emphasizing the movement of the Word within her, "that He would

The Life of Moses [trans. Abraham J. Malherbe and Everett Ferguson; Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1978] 98) or Dionysius the Areopagite's citing Phil 2:9, "'the name which is above every name' and is therefore without a name" (*De divinis nominibus* 4.12–13; *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works* [trans. Colm Luibheid; New York, N.Y.: Paulist Press, 1987] 81–82)—it is Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464) who most notably uses the phrase *coincidentia oppositorum*, first in *De docta ignorantia*/*On Learned Ignorance*, where he develops an understanding of Christ as enfolding the union of opposites or of the union of opposites as unfolding from Christ. Jesus Christ is "simultaneously the maximum in the universe united with the absolute, the perfection of the universe, and the center and circumference of all intellectual nature." This understanding rests upon true knowledge—that of one's own ignorance. As the God-human, Jesus Christ is the ultimate coincidence, a distinct "unity of substance without mingling and without obliteration of either party or substance." Cusa further develops his understanding of *coincidentia oppositorum* in *De visione Dei*/*On the Vision of God* (9.37) where he writes "O Lord, . . . I have discovered that the place where you are found unveiled is girded about with the coincidence of contradictories. This is the wall of paradise, and it is there in paradise that you reside" (*Nicholas of Cusa: Selected Spiritual Writings* [trans. H. Lawrence Bond; New York: Paulist Press, 1977] 24; see also 19, 28, 251–52). Bond offers an excellent introduction to Cusa's thought; Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), and Bernard McGinn, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism* (4 vols.; New York, N.Y.: Crossroad, 1991) provide substantive historical and theological background to the Christian mystical and contemplative traditions.

¹³ By "the human as subject" I mean to address the process of subjectification as intersubjective and Christocentric in nature (see Phil 2:5–8) and to advance a Christological understanding of the human subject with respect to the formative processes of decentering, splitting, incorporating alterity, and being called into question (Levinas), over and against the idea of a unitary, sovereign or autonomous "I." While I do not take it up explicitly in this paper, my correlation of subjectivity formation and Christology, seen here through St. Teresa's "Prayer of Union," raises the question of sexual difference and its representation in language, particularly given contemporary critiques of Freud, Lacan, and "the human subject." My effort here makes an initial claim, attending to an exegesis of imagery found in St. Teresa's language for union with God. This question, however, requires further attention, particularly with regard to the representation of sexual difference and gendered subjectivity in the writings of female and male "mystics." For further references on intersubjectivity, see Jessica Benjamin, "The Shadow of the Other Subject: Intersubjectivity and Feminist Theory," *Shadow of the Other: Intersubjectivity and Gender in Psychoanalysis* (New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 1998) 79–108; Mary Frohlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic: A Study of Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle* (American Academy of Religion Academy Series 83; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1993).

¹⁴ *Interior Castle*, 28 (1.1.1).

speak through me,” St. Teresa’s words reinscribe what Michel de Certeau addresses as the first moment of religious knowledge, the essential invocation of both mystic and prophet: “thy Word, in me.”¹⁵ Identifying her creative dilemma apophatically,¹⁶ St. Teresa writes that she can find “nothing with which to compare the great beauty of a soul and its great capacity,” and yet she has found in this castle, diamond, crystal, as precise and as intricate a symbol as one could imagine.¹⁷

St. Teresa draws upon the clarity of the castle and its capacity for reflecting and refracting light within its coinciding spatial domains of interior and exterior. Her soul as crystalline castle emerges as a dialectical image that holds, at once, inside and outside, singularity and multiplicity, materiality and ethereality. As she casts doubt upon the ability for any known thing to circumscribe or comprehend this beauty of the soul, St. Teresa’s language touches upon the paradoxical nature of her effort, acknowledging in her choice of the castle metaphor both the necessity for preserving the wordless beauty of the soul and the sheer impossibility of doing so. Human attention, she writes, “is centred in the rough setting of the diamond, and in the outer wall of the castle—that is to say, in these bodies of ours.”¹⁸ In a sentence that identifies the body as the outer carapace or boundary of the castle,

¹⁵ “The *invocatio* has long been the first moment of religious knowledge. It is the initial step in St. Anselm’s *Proslogion*, and the field in which a noetic, then a rationality of faith, develop” (De Certeau, “Mystic Speech,” 89).

¹⁶ Throughout this essay, the apophatic and its signification in language will be understood dialectically, as encompassing the cataphatic and thereby conveying both a sense of denial, unsaying, or erasure as well as one of assertion or declaration; it thus references the two possible etymologies of the Greek word *apophasis* (ἀπόφασις—ἀπόφῃμι *a denial, negation*, and ἀπόφασις—ἀποφαίνω *a sentence, decision*; see Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Lexicon Abridged from Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997] 96). Michael A. Sells presents a clear introduction to apophasis as “unsaying” in *Mystical Languages of Unsaying* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); for a deconstructive reading of apophasis, see Jacques Derrida “Sauf le nom (Post-scriptum),” *On the Name* (ed. Thomas Dutoit; trans. David Wood, John P. Leavey, Jr., and Ian McLeod; Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1995) 34–85.

¹⁷ *Interior Castle*, 28 (1.1.1). Luce López-Baralt writes of St. Teresa’s conception of the seven concentric circles of the interior castle, bringing to light literary precedents within Islamic and Hebraic mystical traditions (“Santa Teresa and Islamic Mysticism: The Symbol of the Seven Castles of the Soul,” *Islam in Spanish Literature: From the Middle Ages to the Present* ([trans. Andrew Hurley; Leiden: Brill; San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1992] 91–142). My thanks to Luis Girón-Negrón for this introduction to López-Baralt’s work. See also Alison Weber, *Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of Femininity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990) 98–99. Weber describes the spatiality of the castle as “elusive,” noting “attempts by Teresa’s exegetes to produce a pictorial representation of its seven dwelling places have proved curiously inconsistent.” While Weber recognizes that these “inconsistencies” may reflect St. Teresa’s frustration with the inevitable tension between “systematized theology and affective spirituality,” she argues St. Teresa’s resistance “to the unity allegory demanded” as “a response to external sources of pressure.” I suggest that St. Teresa’s language and imagery may also reflect the ambivalent field of representation, of which the human subject is a part, and the sustained effort required to bring into the ambiguous parameters of language that which resides in the domain of experience and in/corporeality.

¹⁸ *Interior Castle*, 29 (1.1.2).

St. Teresa intimates the necessity of the body as the vehicle through which meditation and prayer, the “door of entry into this castle,” are undertaken and achieved.¹⁹ Aligning this metaphor with the soul and with the body’s relationship to the soul in what may be called an immanent transcendence,²⁰ St. Teresa’s words emphasize the infinite space of this luminous castle within the body and its capacious containment of many Dwellings.

Heralding a spherical, circumferential space,²¹ St. Teresa’s vibrant image of the soul as castle addresses the placement and orientation of its various Dwellings, “some above, others below, others at each side,” and centermost to these all is “the chiefest mansion where the most secret things pass between God and the soul.”²² Her description compels an interiorized view, eliciting a perspective from the inside, a looking out from the heart or center in which the Sun dwells. In her understanding of the orientations of these Dwellings, above, below, at each side and center, St. Teresa limns in language a sense of omnipresence, an all-encompassing fullness within which, she writes, God is pleased to grant certain favors “for there are so many of them that nobody can possibly understand them all.”²³ Turning to the possibility of entering such beauty, such light, St. Teresa evolves a conception of the castle of the soul that expounds a double interiority, articulating that “we ourselves are the castle,” and advising that the soul need enter within itself.²⁴ It is, as de Certeau writes, a “beautiful object [that] immediately unites opposites: . . . it is a strict delimitation of a space one must ‘enter when one is in it already,’ a place where one dwells without dwelling there—and whose center is also exteriority (God).”²⁵

St. Teresa explains. Just as there are myriad Dwellings in the soul, so too there are myriad “ways of ‘being’ in a place.”²⁶ Addressing the castle as beautiful and resplendent, “this Orient pearl, this tree of life, planted in the living waters of

¹⁹ Ibid., 31 (1.1.7).

²⁰ I allude here to Michel de Certeau’s assertion that the “I is an other,” (“Mystic Speech,” 96; see pages 351–53 below), and draw relation to Michael A. Sells’s understanding of this dialectic of immanence and transcendence within a semantic context: “The effort to express and affirm transcendence leads to an affirmation of radical immanence. That which is beyond is within. That which is other, is the non-other” (*Mystical Languages*, 207).

²¹ Luce López-Baralt comments on this spherical quality, making comparison with the Islamic imagery of Semnani’s “seven ‘orbs’ of light” and the Persian Kubra’s sense of the soul “in quietude, like a transparent orb or circle of light.” López-Baralt writes of “the image of a circle or sphere [as] a universal symbol of perfection and of God” (“Santa Teresa and Islamic Mysticism,” *Islam in Spanish Literature*, 121). I would add that the specific context of this spherical image has a corporeal referent, that of the body in prayer.

²² *Interior Castle*, 29 (1.1.3).

²³ Ibid., 29–30 (1.1.3).

²⁴ Ibid., 31 (1.1.5).

²⁵ De Certeau, “Mystic Speech,” 95.

²⁶ *Interior Castle*, 31 (1.1.5).

life—namely, in God,”²⁷ St. Teresa’s words evoke those of Jesus speaking of “the living water . . . the spring of water welling up to eternal life,”²⁸ and draw analogy to the Marian symbol of the pearl and the originary, virginal ground of Eden.²⁹ St. Teresa understands that the soul is planted as a tree in the spring of life and employs the imagery of reflection, speaking of a “mirror of humility” which sees in

²⁷ Ibid., 33 (1.2.1). C. G. Jung writes of the mother archetype in a similar manner. The “archetype is often associated with things and places standing for fertility and fruitfulness. . . . It can be attached to a rock, a cave, a tree, a spring, a deep well, or to various vessels such as the baptismal font, or to vessel-shaped flowers like the rose or the lotus” (*The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* [trans. R. F. C. Hull; New York, N.Y.: Princeton University Press, 1968] 81).

²⁸ John 4:10–14. See St. Teresa’s description of the four degrees of prayer via the Four Waters, or the four methods of watering the garden (*Life*, chs. 11–22). See also St. Augustine’s descriptions of God as “fount of life” (*fons vitae*) to whom one returns along the path of humility (*itaque pietate humili reditur in te* [*Confessions* 3.8.16]), as “spring” (*fontem*) to which Augustine returns saying, “Let me drink this and live by it. May I not be my own life” (ibid., 12.10.10), as the “fount of life” (*fontis vitae*), the waters drunk by “the mouth of the heart” (*ore cordis*) “flowing from your spring on high (*in superna fluenta fontis tui*, . . . *qui est apud te*) ‘the spring of life’ which is with you” (ibid., 9.10.23). While St. Teresa makes a direct reference to the *Confessions* (*Interior Castle*, 174 [6.7.9]), I do not intend here to note influence so much as to highlight similarity in their theological emphasis on humility, in the allusion to the primeval waters of creation (Gen 1:1–13), and in the baptismal significance of water. Though both works reside within confessional, contemplative and autobiographical frames, St. Teresa’s work is differentiated by its taking contemplative prayer as its specific subject matter.

²⁹ In her mention of “the tree of life,” St. Teresa’s language for the soul implies a relation between the processes of contemplative prayer and a return to the virgin earth of the Garden of Eden. The Marian character of this relation is textually rooted in early patristic homiletics that address the Eve/Mary parallel, or the Virgin Mary as Second Eve. Justin Martyr (100–165 C.E.; *Dialogue with Trypho* 100; PG 6, 709–12) offers the first documented reference to Mary as Second Eve, with Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 130–200 C.E.; *On The Apostolic Preaching*, 33) establishing it as a thematic variant on St. Paul’s Christ as Second Adam (1 Cor 15:20–23; 45–49). “And just as through a disobedient virgin man was struck and, falling, died, so also by means of a virgin, who obeyed the word of God, man, being revived (*ἀναζωοποιηθῶ*), received life. . . . For it was necessary for Adam to be recapitulated in Christ, that ‘mortality might be swallowed up in immortality;’ and Eve in Mary, that a virgin, become an advocate for a virgin, might undo and destroy the virginal disobedience by virginal obedience” (St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *On the Apostolic Preaching* (trans. John Behr; Crestwood, N. Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1997) 61). For a brief survey of the topic, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *Mary Through the Centuries* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996) 39–52. Nicholas Constatas gives a detailed treatment to the theme of the pearl as an incarnational symbol in patristic literature (“Mother of Pearl,” in *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity* [Leiden: Brill, 2003] 290–94). C. G. Jung references Matthew 13:46 (“on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it”) alongside the Apocryphal New Testament story of “a son sent forth by his parents to seek the pearl that fell from the King’s crown.” Jung describes the pearl as an instance of “the treasure hard to attain” motif in the psychology of the child archetype (*Archetypes*, 18, 160; Jung refers to the Syriac “Hymn of the Soul” in *Acts of Thomas*; see *The Apocryphal New Testament* [trans. Montague Rhodes James; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924] 411–15).

any good thing its source,³⁰ “realizing that without His help we are powerless.”³¹ In these words which instantiate both the doubleness and pictorial reversal of a mirror, one sees the image of Christ reflected, a Christ born in human likeness and humbling himself even to death on a cross (see Phil 2:7–8). St. Teresa’s “mirror of humility” seeks to incarnate this Christ, the *imago Dei* who reverses hierarchies and dismantles oppositions (see Matt 19:30; Mark 10:31; Luke 1:52–53), aligning humility with strength and dependence with power. In this alignment, St. Teresa’s “mirror of humility” opens a view into the beauty of a sacred humanity that testifies to the aesthetic as an incarnate, ethical relation of the soul to its source. For St. Teresa’s use of the word “beautiful” describes an aesthetic experienced by the soul, not within the phenomenon of a formal surface but within the depths of a formless revelation—“by looking at His purity we shall see our foulness; by meditating on His humility, we shall see how far we are from being humble.”³² In St. Teresa’s “mirror of humility,” then, we may see beauty as an internal yet intersubjective phenomenon taking place within the human soul in the realization of its lack,³³

³⁰ *Interior Castle*, 35 (1.2.5). Teresa writes of a favor granted by God that she found to be “a mirror of humility, for it had made her realize that any good thing we do has its source, not in ourselves but rather in that spring where this tree, which is the soul, is planted, and in that sun which sheds its radiance on our works.” A relation can be drawn to Jacques Lacan’s mirror-stage in which the child sees and identifies with its specular image. Lacan writes of such *identification* as “the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image,” noting its relation to the ancient term *imago* and its indicating the “*I* in a primordial form before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject” (“Mirror Stage,” 2). Lacan concludes that the mirror-stage is a “particular case of the function of the *imago*, which is to establish a relation between the organism and its reality—or, as they say, between the *Innenwelt* and the *Umwelt*” (“Mirror Stage,” 4).

³¹ *Ibid.*, 35–36 (1.2.5). St. Teresa’s emphasis on the necessity and virtue of humility and the created subject’s utter dependence on God, finds notable relation to St. Augustine’s *Confessions*, 7.18.24: “To possess my God, the humble Jesus, I was not yet humble enough. I did not know what weakness was meant to teach. / Your Word, eternal truth, higher than the superior parts of your creation, raises those submissive to him to himself. . . . By this he detaches from themselves those who are willing to be made his subjects and carries them across to himself. . . . They are no longer to place confidence in themselves, but rather to become weak. They see at their feet divinity become weak by his sharing in our ‘coat of skin’ (Gen. 3:21)” (*Confessions* [trans. Henry Chadwick; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998] 128). Here, humility functions as a portal to recognition of human createdness in the light of God, thus, perhaps, offering a theological reason for St. Teresa’s language of humility, which includes confessing her sinfulness, wretchedness, and incapacities—often in catechetical or paradoxical language (i.e., a linguistic *coincidentia oppositorum*). For critical feminist analyses of St. Teresa’s language and the “double-bind” which characterized her life and writing, see Alison Weber, *Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of Femininity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990); Gillian T. W. Ahlgren “The Right to Write: Authority and Rhetorical Strategy in Teresa’s Works,” *Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996) 67–84.

³² *Interior Castle*, 38 (1.2.9).

³³ De Certeau writes: “‘Communications’ (communications from God or those established among the saints) is everywhere a void to be filled, and forms the focal point of mystical accounts and treatises. They are writings produced from this lack” (“Mystic Speech,” 88).

in an innate dependence affected through the soul's recognition of itself, in the soul's seeing itself through the mirror of an exteriority (God).³⁴ When St. Teresa writes that we ourselves are the castle and advises the soul to enter within itself, her words reinscribe a subjectivizing interiority, an inward turning of the soul,³⁵ which marks an originary site of beauty and signification—a site that corresponds to that which Michel de Certeau designates as “the *empty* place (empty of world) where the *other* speaks.”³⁶ In St. Teresa's castle that unites opposites, we will see that it is this empty place, this place of *nothing*, which becomes the ground of union with God—a place where the dialectical movement of desire and lack is representative of the human as a being subject to, yet incorporating, the *other*. We will look further at this aspect in St. Teresa's theology below, after completing the exegesis of her description of the soul.

³⁴ See 1 Cor 13:12: “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then we will see face to face.” The mirror image appears throughout Neoplatonic, Christian, and Islamic contemplative traditions, notably in Plotinus's *Enneads* (see 6.9 with respect to beauty), in Gregory of Nyssa's *The Life of Moses* (see 2.157–58 for the metaphor of the mountain for the knowledge of God, and 2.219–240 for eternal progress), and in Augustine's corpus (particularly in his treatment of the *imago* and *visio Dei* in his *Literal Commentary on Genesis*, and in *Confessions* 7–10, 12). In Sufism, the image of a mirror is central to Ibn Arabi's thought (d. 1240 C.E./A.H. 638). He writes in his *Fusûs al-Hikam* (lit. “the settings of Wisdom”) of God's creating the world “as something amorphous and without grace comparable to a mirror not yet polished. . . . So then the Divine Order required the clarification of the mirror of the world; and Adam became the light itself of this mirror and the spirit of this form.” (“Of the Divine Wisdom [*al-hikmat al-ilâhiyah*] in the Word of Adam,” *The Wisdom of the Prophets (Fusus al-Hikam)* (trans. Titus Burckhardt [Arabic to French]; trans. Angela Culme-Seymour [French to English]; Gloucestershire: Beshara Publications, 1975) 9–10. See also Bernard McGinn, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism* (New York, N.Y.: Crossroad, 1991), particularly vol. 1: *The Foundations of Mysticism*; Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981); Margaret R. Miles, “Image,” *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* (ed. Mark C. Taylor; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998) 160–72; David Chidester, *Word and Light: Seeing, Hearing, and Religious Discourse* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992); Michael A. Sells, “Ibn Arabi's Polished Mirror: Identity Shift and Meaning Event,” *Mystical Languages*, 63–89. St. Teresa's use of the mirror image also emphasizes a dialectical understanding of *interiority*: a phenomenon wherein interior and exterior coinhere, as in a liminal space “between,” a “taking place” in which center and exteriority coincide. See above, n. 4.

³⁵ On this subjective turn, compare St. Augustine, *Confessions* 10.27 (38): “Late have I loved you, beauty so old and so new: late have I loved you. And see, you were within and I was in the external world and sought you there. . . . You were with me, and I was not with you.” (*sero te amavi, pulchritudo tam antiqua et tam nova, sero te amavi! et ecce intus eras et ego foris, et ibi te quaerebam. . . . mecum eras, et tecum non eram*). On Augustine's inward turning and upward ascent of the soul in contemplation, see Bernard McGinn, *The Presence of God*, 1:232–43. See also Jacques Derrida's description of the *Phaedo*, 80e: “a sort of subjectivizing interiorization, the movement of the soul's gathering of itself, a fleeing of the body toward its interior where it withdraws into itself in order to recall itself to itself, in order to be next to itself, in order to keep itself in this gesture of remembering. This conversion turns the soul around and amasses it upon itself” (*The Gift of Death* [trans. David Wills; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995] 13).

³⁶ De Certeau, “Mystic Speech,” 94.

As St. Teresa elaborates her view of the many Dwellings of the soul, she warns that they are not set in a linear progression, “in a row, one behind the other,” and guides instead to concentrate on the center wherein the King abides.³⁷ Enlisting the physical form of a shrub, a palmito, which she describes as having “many outer rinds surrounding the savoury part within,”³⁸ St. Teresa draws an analogy to the Sun at the center, the heart of the soul’s sustenance, emanating its light throughout all the Dwellings. Her words orient the reader within the center point of a sphere, a center point wherein the essential relation between soul and God resides. As the soul’s need to be unbounded,³⁹ free to enter and leave any one of the Dwellings, becomes explicit, St. Teresa acknowledges the first and requisite room of self-knowledge as the singular chamber within which a soul may rest for a long duration.⁴⁰ In a striking analogy which reviews the primacy of growing humble, St. Teresa links this room of self-knowledge with the “bee-making” activity of humility, stressing humility’s durative, continual necessity to “be doing its work.”⁴¹ With this apt metaphor of the bee, its honey, and its hive, St. Teresa’s words imply an incarnational economy that recalls the interiority of the virginal womb.⁴² Her words bear the precision of an implicit spatial analogy to the honeycomb structure of a beehive, which is itself built from the inside out—a sphericity in multiple akin to St. Teresa’s castle with many Dwellings. Interwoven in this analogy is a latent sense of the sweetness of work and union, and of a centralizing presence around which, and for which, all the bees work.

Here, St. Teresa’s language extends beyond itself, setting into relation both bee and Queen, soul and King. The soul, which she likens to a bee “constantly flying about from flower to flower,” is the soul unbounded, “emerg[ing] from self-knowledge and soar[ing] aloft in meditation upon the greatness and the majesty of

³⁷ *Interior Castle*, 37 (1.2.8).

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Recall de Certeau’s reading of the ab-solute as the un-bound, as in “a language that can say the ab-solute (un-bound), endlessly, only by erasing itself” (“Mystic Speech,” 81).

⁴⁰ Rowan Williams writes insightfully on St. Teresa’s understanding of self-knowledge in contrast to self-interest, stating that the *Interior Castle* is “an attack on interiority as an ideal in itself, and this opening emphasis on self-knowledge should alert us to this fact.” He continues, describing the first Dwellings as “the place where we are struggling to break free from obsessive and defensive concern with self: where we have begun, however ineptly, to turn our attention to God in thought and prayer” (*Teresa of Avila*, 116, see also 115–16).

⁴¹ *Interior Castle*, 37 (1.2.8).

⁴² See Porphyry (c. 232–c. 305), *On the Cave of the Nymphs* (trans. Robert Lamberton; Barrytown, N.Y.: Station Hill Press, 1983) 30–32, for his treatment of “bees” as “souls entering into γένεσις,” [*Od.* 13, 102–12], “specifically those that were to live just lives and return after performing acts pleasing to the gods, for bees love to return to their source and are remarkably even-tempered and sober. . . . Thus honeycombs and bees would constitute appropriate symbols . . . for souls becoming ‘brides’ as they enter γένεσις.” C. G. Jung also writes of a connection between bees, as an allegory, and the Virgin Mary, making reference to its liturgical instantiation in the text for the consecration of the Easter candle (*Archetypes*, 185 n. 5).

its God.”⁴³ Significantly, however, the soul need remain guided by its anchorage in the earth, in a self-knowledge founded in its continual cultivation of humility. “[W]hy should we desire wings to fly?” asks St. Teresa. “Let us rather try to get the greatest possible profit out of walking.”⁴⁴ With these words St. Teresa instructs the integration of soul and body, spirit and flesh (see John 3:6), tilling the ground for understanding the event of the soul’s emergence as a double and incarnate movement, a movement in which the heights of elevation (soaring aloft) and the steadfast ground of incorporation (walking) intersect. Her metaphor of the bee, the hive and the honey iterates a Christological movement toward the material, toward the humus from which human being was created (Gen 2:7). This living anchorage in the humanity of Christ, an anchorage that transforms the interior matter of the soul in prayer, manifests itself by way of a “delicate comparison” in chapter 2 of the Fifth Dwellings.⁴⁵

■ On Certainty

The prologue to the Prayer of Union comes by way of a “very material” certainty of the soul.⁴⁶ Beckoning clarity via her questioning—“How did the soul see it and understand it if it can neither see nor understand?”—St. Teresa’s language describes an apophasis of vision and cognition at the moment when God implants the certainty of God’s presence in the interior of the soul.⁴⁷ The soul, being “made, as it were, completely foolish in order the better to impress upon it true wisdom,”⁴⁸ suffers this apophasis as both an affirmation and an erasure of God’s presence.⁴⁹ St. Teresa’s words situate the soul within a state of heightened paradox, a *coincidentia oppositorum*, wherein foolishness commingles with wisdom in a condition that “[the soul] can neither see nor hear nor understand.”⁵⁰ Inhabiting the space of a loss akin to St. John of the Cross’s night of sensory purgation,⁵¹ the soul ex-

⁴³ *Interior Castle*, 37–38 (1.2.8).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 37–38 (1.2.9).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 103 (5.2).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 101 (5.1.9). Compare Peers: “This certainty of the soul is very material,” and Kavanaugh and Rodriguez: “This certitude is what matters now.”

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, (5.1.10). This certainty is not present in a partial union, such as in those of earlier Dwellings (see above, n. 5).

⁴⁸ *Interior Castle*, 101 (5.1.9).

⁴⁹ Recall the dual or ambi-valent meaning in *apophasis* and its referential embrace of the cataphatic. In this sense, *apophasis* holds two meanings that seem to contradict yet coexist in the one word. See n. 16.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* See also 1 Cor 1:20–25. This lack of comprehension is also endemic to the fourth degree of prayer which St. Teresa writes of in her *Life*, ch. 18: “if there is union of all the faculties, the soul cannot communicate the fact, even if it so desires (when actually experiencing it, I mean): if it can communicate it, then it is not union” (*The Life of Teresa of Jesus* [ed. and trans. E. Allison Peers; New York, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1960] 174).

⁵¹ See the poem “The Ascent of Mount Carmel” by St. John of the Cross, and his commentary on “the privation of the appetite in all things” (*The Collected Words of St. John of the Cross*, [trans.

ists within an aporia of sense and comprehension, suspended in an altered state. Understood here as the advent of otherness in the soul wherein God saturates and absorbs the soul's interior faculties, this state of suspended alterity, or, of the soul "standing outside of itself" (*ekstasis*), is described by St. Teresa as a "period [that] is always short and seems to the soul even shorter than it really is."⁵² St. Teresa's language confirms this suspended state implicitly within the soul's return—for "when it returns to itself" the soul is unable to "doubt that God has been in it and it has been in God."⁵³ Reflecting the circumferential interiority of the castle, St. Teresa's words convey this sense of "going out of" or "standing beside" oneself as a reciprocal movement of interpenetration and reception, of God revealed and God implanting Godself in the soul. Her language, "that God has been in it and it has been in God,"⁵⁴ affirms the bivalent movement of *ekstasis* and the central, intersubjective, and revelatory axis of relation it traces: the soul entering into itself (interiority) even as God (exteriority) is entering into the soul.

St. Teresa emphasizes this event of relation as one which impregnates the soul with the certainty of God's presence such that "when [the soul] returns to itself" it sees with this certainty, "not because it is a vision . . . but because of a certainty which remains in the soul, which can be put there only by God."⁵⁵ Certainty is, for St. Teresa, the decisive indication of God's presence even in God's [perceived] absence.⁵⁶ Here, one sees that contemplative prayer incorporates "in one person and one hypostasis"⁵⁷ the reciprocity of an intersubjective, dialogical relation, a relation that performs the question asked by de Certeau: "Do we exist to speak to the other, or be spoken by him?"⁵⁸ By integrating subject and object, materiality and utterance, the act of prayer and the active word, St. Teresa's language—"[t]his certainty of the soul is very material"⁵⁹—bears the procreative and incarnational resonance of a certainty which has nothing "to do with bodily form" yet gestures

Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D. and Otilio Rodriguez, O.C.D.; Washington, D.C.: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1991]; see 113–14 for the poem and 115–53 for the commentary, esp. 121).

⁵² *Interior Castle*, 101 (5.1.9).

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Interior Castle*, 101 (5.1.10).

⁵⁶ In her discussion of deception in the works of St. Teresa of Avila, Susan Schreiner writes that certainty is "the most commonly cited proof for the authenticity of spiritual experience" in St. Teresa's writings. Although the devil can mime a "false humility" and create "a false quiet, consolation and vision," certainty provides a test that surpasses doubt; it leaves an assurance that "literally triumphs over doubt" ("Unmasking the Angel of Light: The Problem of Deception in Martin Luther and Teresa of Avila," in *Mystics, Presence and Aporia* (ed. Michael Kessler and Christian Sheppard [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003] 118–37).

⁵⁷ See n. 7.

⁵⁸ De Certeau, "Mystic Speech," 91.

⁵⁹ *Interior Castle*, 101 (5.1.9).

toward a veiled dimension of our corporeality in referring to the divinity of “Our Lord Jesus Christ.”⁶⁰

Moving to persuade by way of the invisible, the unseen, and the incomprehensible, St. Teresa underscores the aporia of the soul’s experience of God, an experience in which proximity and loss, erasure and renewal, coincide. Writing that she does not know *how* one “can become so convinced of what we have not seen,” but that she knows “it is the work of God,”⁶¹ St. Teresa’s words harbor the very certainty that she endeavors to illuminate. As she highlights the agency of God and the requisite humility of the soul, St. Teresa counsels that “it suffices us to know that He Who brings this to pass is all-powerful, and as it is God Who does it and we, however hard we work, are quite incapable of achieving it, let us not try to become capable of understanding it either.”⁶² Her language, at once appealing to the certainty of presence and the human incapacity to represent and comprehend, guides via an interior division that differentiates the capacities of the soul from the capacities of human understanding.⁶³ Citing Song 2:4, “He brought me to the banqueting house, and his intention toward me was love,” St. Teresa emphasizes the active yet ambivalent agency of God bringing the soul further inward, into his “cellar of wine,” and contrasts it with the receptivity and surrender of the soul: “[i]t did not say that she *went*.”⁶⁴ For we cannot, states St. Teresa, “enter by any efforts of our own; His Majesty must put us right into the centre of our soul, and must enter there Himself.”⁶⁵

Desiring a complete surrender accomplished in the suspension and return of the soul, St. Teresa’s language choreographs a dialectic of absence and presence, both within the soul and within the soul’s relation to God, such that “it is His pleasure that

⁶⁰ Ibid., 102 (5.1.11).

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., 101 (5.1.11).

⁶³ The division of the capacities of the soul and those of human understanding is central to St. Teresa’s understanding of the structure of the soul; this division splits interior and exterior faculties, i.e., the spiritual senses and the external or worldly senses. For a clear analysis of this aspect of the division of the soul and the senses in St. Teresa’s works, see Edward Howells, “The Structure of the Soul According to Teresa of Avila,” in *John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila*, 70–92.

⁶⁴ *Interior Castle*, 103 (5.1.12). There is a profound resonance here with Dionysius the Areopagite’s explicit description of the ecstatic nature of the divine eros in which St. Paul participates (*De divinis nominibus* 4.13). Citing Gal 2:20 (“I live no longer but Christ lives in me”), Dionysius describes a movement into a radical passivity where the “I” no longer lives but is instead converted into the “me” in which Christ abides. Grammatically, this manifests itself as a movement from the nominative subject “I” to the accusative direct object of the preposition “in,” pointing to the splitting of the “I,” or its doubling as both a propositional and positional signifier. N.B. I do not suggest that Dionysius influenced St. Teresa, but that St. Teresa’s words represent this same phenomenon of the divine eros within the human soul, a soul in union with Christ through contemplative prayer. See above, nn. 10–11.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 103 (5.1.12).

our will . . . should have no part in this.”⁶⁶ Neither should our senses consciously take part in this moment of certainty, this night of sensory erasure, which St. Teresa describes as the soul’s being asleep, for, as she persuades, “He will come into the centre of the soul without using a door.”⁶⁷ Here, the dialectical relation between presence and absence is given visibility in the two movements of the soul’s *ekstasis*—a movement inward to the center that is at once also a stepping outside toward God (exteriority). St. Teresa’s reference to Christ’s entrance into the upper room and to His resurrection from the tomb figuratively echoes and embodies this double, dialectical movement. Her words harbor a certainty born in the humility of the soul’s relation to the divine, the latter coming “without using a door” and the former requiring prayer as an entrance within.

■ The Prayer of Union

In the second chapter of the Fifth Dwellings, St. Teresa compares the Prayer of Union to the “wonderful way in which silk is made—a way which no one could invent but God.”⁶⁸ She begins with the miraculous activity of silkworms, describing them as seeds seeking nourishment from mulberry leaves, without which they would remain as if dead. Sustaining themselves thus, the silkworms grow to full size at which point they begin to spin their silk on twigs, “making themselves very tight little cocoons, in which they bury themselves.”⁶⁹ Reinscribing the dialectic of in/visibility inherent in representation, and here situated within the activities of generation and death, St. Teresa draws a clear analogy between the soul and the silkworm, such that the soul, when full-grown, having been sustained by the good food of meditations, confessions, and sermons provided by the Church, “builds the house in which it is to die.”⁷⁰ Limning an interiority so finely woven that the soul within will be hidden with Christ, St. Teresa describes the Prayer of Union as this intimate enclosure that the soul as silkworm spins.

Christological resonance permeates the humble activity of the silkworm; its spinning enswathes the weaving of a life in the heart of humanity, in the Word made flesh (John 1:14). Confluent with the imagery in Orthodox icons of the Annunciation wherein the Virgin Mary holds a spindle in her left hand, St. Teresa’s silkworm spinning its cocoon evokes the procreativity of the virgin womb, the generative sphere of enclosure, gestation and birth.⁷¹ The scarlet spindle held by

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 104 (5.2.2).

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 105 (5.2.4).

⁷¹ See Luke 1:35: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.” For details on the iconography of the Annunciation, see Constantine Carnavos, *Guide to Byzantine Iconography* (2 vols.; Boston: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 1993) 1:125–30. For an extended

the Virgin may be read sacramentally, as a visible sign of an inward grace, as a symbolic foreshadowing of the Christ child conceived within her womb. In St. Teresa's image of the silkworm spinning, the incarnational significance is multiple: the cocoon represents, spatially and materially, the apophatic nature of conception in the womb, the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit in the Lucan account of the Annunciation, and the swaddling clothes of the child conceived and born.⁷² Encompassing the diminutive and the monumental, St. Teresa's metaphor of the silkworm draws together image and Word as it compels a Christological poetics of the intimate and the immense; the immeasurable yet immanent spinning activity of the soul symbolically inscribes an agency that intertwines finite and infinite such that Christ becomes both cocoon and dwelling-place, a home which "we can construct . . . for ourselves and hide ourselves in."⁷³

Recognizing enclosure as the boundless space of both virtue and purgation, St. Teresa's words illumine the humble reality of the soul's "tiny achievement" when seen in proportion to Christ's greatness which unites with it and "give[s] it such worth that its reward will be the Lord Himself."⁷⁴ Illuminating a relation between the light of Christ and the darkness over which this light prevails, the silkworm spins an interiority that cultivates the very circumference within which the soul's night of renunciation will take place. The cocoon becomes, as Michel de Certeau's words suggest, "a siteless site," fragile yet resilient, its carapace providing a locus for division and union, for a cleavage that is both a "place of locution," and a place of dialogue, intercession, and interlocution.⁷⁵

"Let us renounce our self-love and self-will, and our attachment to earthly things," St. Teresa exhorts, her words instructing an aesthetic of detachment through ways of acting—"penance, prayer, mortification, obedience"—advising a renunciation of all that is not holy, all that is not God.⁷⁶ Evocative of both St. John of the Cross's purification of the senses and St. Paul's admonishment, "Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry)" (Col 3:5), St. Teresa's language aligns aesthetic and ethical spheres, counseling the soul toward transformation in Christ through a subtractive and additive process: "We can neither subtract from, nor add to, God, but

excursus on symbols of weaving in the Byzantine religious imagination, see Nicholas Conostas, "The Purple Thread and the Veil of Flesh: Symbols of Weaving in the Sermons of Proclus," in *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity: Homilies 1–5, Texts and Translations* (Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 66; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 315–58.

⁷² See below, n. 84.

⁷³ *Interior Castle*, 105 (5.2.5).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ De Certeau writes of three conventions to be established, which are elements in mystic texts related to utterance. "They concern the precondition of discourse (a division that establishes contractual relations), the status of discourse (a locus where the Spirit speaks), and the figuration of discourse as a content (an image of the 'I')" ("Mystic Speech," 90).

⁷⁶ *Interior Castle*, 106 (5.2.6).

we can subtract from, and add to, ourselves, just as little silkworms do.”⁷⁷ Bearing reference to the Neoplatonic metaphor of the soul as a statue that is to be made beautiful by cutting and smoothing,⁷⁸ St. Teresa’s analogy persuades an aesthetic process of humility, reflection and refinement, spinning the Christological cocoon around the soul, not solely for purgation and withdrawal but as the nurture and protection necessary for the silkworm to die.⁷⁹ Indeed, the spinning of the silkworm coalesces the seemingly opposite movements of addition and subtraction, expansion and contraction, into the virtue of repose in Christ. For St. Teresa’s cocoon, as a house built within the promise of prayer, is understood to be Christ, Christ both as shield and as aperture through which new life is engendered and born.

Acting as a threshold situated between two states, the soul’s enclosure in Christ performs a coincidence of opposites, providing both armature and mold for the relinquishing of self, self-love, and self-will. When St. Teresa states explicitly that “[t]his house may be understood here to mean Christ,”⁸⁰ she recalls St. Paul: “Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (Col 3:2–3). Indeed, in this profound interiority crafted by the soul, around the soul, above and below the soul, Christ is the mean and the measure of this union, for, “when Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory” (Col 3:4). Here, St. Teresa’s language finds parallel with Rom 6:4: “we have been buried with Christ by baptism into death”—a burial that her words guide the soul toward, encouraging a union in death, an elocation that harbors the requisite division for signification to take place.⁸¹ In this urge toward union, death and division, by, through and within

⁷⁷ Ibid., 106 (5.2.5).

⁷⁸ See Plotinus, *First Ennead* 6.9: “Act as does the creator of a statue that is to be made beautiful: he cuts away here, he smoothes there, he makes this line lighter, this other purer, until a lovely face has grown upon his work” (*The Six Enneads* [trans. Stephen MacKenna and Bertram S. Page; Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952] 25). Gregory of Nyssa reiterates this idea in *The Life of Moses* 2.231, “where the ardent lover of beauty, constantly receiving an image (*eikon*), as it were, of what he longs for, wants to be filled with the very impression of the archetype” (*From Glory to Glory: Texts from Gregory of Nyssa’s Mystical Writings* [ed. Jean Daniélou and Herbert Musurillo, S.J.; trans. Herbert Musurillo, S.J.; New York, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2001] 146). Musurillo notes “what [Jean] Daniélou has called the doctrine of the *epectasis*, or the indefinite progression of the soul in its movement towards God” (*From Glory to Glory*, 292 n. 30). Gregory of Nazianzus also uses this image of a statue in his discussion of “the theologian” in *Oration* 27.7: “to take a look at ourselves and to smooth the theologian in us, like a statue, into beauty” (*On God and Christ: The Five Theological Orations and Two Letters to Cledonius* [trans. Frederick Williams and Lionel R. Williams; Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2002] 30). See above, n. 34.

⁷⁹ Cf. the “emptying” and “nakedness” inherent in St. John of the Cross’s dark night of the spirit (*The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, 395–412). St. John describes the purgation of the soul as producing “certain needs, aridities, darknesses, and conflicts,” 395 (2.1).

⁸⁰ *Interior Castle*, 105 (5.2.4).

⁸¹ I mean to highlight the sense of division or splitting which is endemic to the formation of human subjectivity, and to understand this split or division Christologically, as taking place in

the Word, St. Teresa implicitly acknowledges St. Paul's words in her own: "let it die, as in fact it does when it has completed the work which it was created to do. Then we shall see God and shall ourselves be as completely hidden in His greatness as is this little worm in its cocoon."⁸²

Understanding this double formation of the soul—in union and division—as a reinscription of the Chalcedonian affirmation of both difference and union "coming together in one person and one hypostasis,"⁸³ the soul's union with God may now be seen as a cleavage effected in, with, and through Christ. In St. Teresa's analogy of the silkworm, this Christological cleavage, rendered in union and division, enfolds a dialectic of revelation ("we shall see God") and concealment ("shall ourselves be as completely hidden") within the soul, such that the Prayer of Union initiates, simultaneously, a death and a birth, the "stripp[ing] off the old self with its practices" and a "cloth[ing] with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator" (Col 3:9–10). As the swaddling clothes of birth veil the burial shroud of death, St. Teresa's analogy of the silkworm yields a kenotic and incarnational image of the soul; the soul's spinning paradoxically conjoins the material, human investiture of the Word (see John 1:14) and the soul's desire to divest, to become naked, in order to be clothed in Christ. In St. Teresa's animated prose, these two activities, which consecrate the transformation and conversion of the soul, occur dialectically, effecting a Christological image that conflates in vibrant metaphor the imagery of death and crucifixion with that of birth and incarnation.⁸⁴

Here, the self-emptying of the silkworm mirrors the Christological hymn of Phil 2:5–8, showing the cocoon of Christ to be a transformative crucible and a cross immured into the soul "uniting our small trials with the great trials which

Christ, through Christ, and with Christ. The requisite division for signification to take place here occurs within the soul, within the formation of the human as subject, such that the subject *becomes* signification, emerging from union and death as an ethical subject who embodies the cross and lives its union and separation of the human and divine. See above, nn. 9–10, on the splitting of an utterance into a positionality and a propositionality (Benveniste) in relation to Lacan's splitting of the subject in the mirror stage.

⁸² Col 3:3; *Interior Castle*, 106 (5.2.6).

⁸³ Again, recall the Definition of Chalcedon: "With the difference of the natures not at all removed for the sake of the union but rather what is proper to each nature preserved and coming together in one person [a single person] and one hypostasis [a single subsistent being]."

⁸⁴ This conflation of the imagery of death and crucifixion with that of birth and incarnation is given visual representation in Greek Orthodox two-sided icons that depict the Virgin Mother and Child on one side (often the Hodegetria as a variant of the Virgin of the Passion) and the Crucifixion or Man of Sorrows on the other. In such icons, the Virgin holds the Christ Child who is clothed in a gold-embroidered *loros* (band) that represents "the Child's swaddling clothes, a feature connected both with the Nativity and with the Entombment of Christ" (Chrysanthé Baltoyianni, *Icons: Mother of God* [Athens: Adam Editions, 1994] 211; her description of the icon continues through page 216). See also *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (ed. Maria Vassilaki; Athens: Benaki Museum; Milan: Skira, 2000) 484–87.

He suffered, and mak[ing] both of them into one.”⁸⁵ In this language which mimes the union that is Christ, “made known in two natures” yet “coming together in one person and one hypostasis,” St. Teresa’s imagery conveys the soul’s simple union with God as a cleft within which the soul becomes “hidden” in God’s greatness as God “allows Himself to be apprehended.”⁸⁶ Corresponding to Michel de Certeau’s understanding of the founding act of self in self-surrender as an act in which “the subject enters a retreat, [going] where the world’s objects are absent,”⁸⁷ St. Teresa’s image of the silkworm’s cocoon offers a space for seeing such a retreat, for witnessing the fold of a union that divides the self from the external world.⁸⁸ This division, effected in the soul and formative for human subjectivity and signification,⁸⁹ correlates to de Certeau’s writing of the establishment of an apophatic place (the “*I*”), here understood as the tomb wherein Christ, the desired Word, the “utterance” par excellence,⁹⁰ and the heart of humanity, gestates and is born within the soul of the human as subject.

De Certeau’s thought enfolds these dual senses of union and retreat, emptiness and plenitude, in a discourse on desire.⁹¹ He addresses this apophatic yet founda-

⁸⁵ *Interior Castle*, 106 (5.2.5).

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* Earlier St. Teresa writes that “we shall see God.” See Exod 33:22, “and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by,” and Ps 17:8, “Guard me as the apple of the eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings.”

⁸⁷ De Certeau, “Mystic Speech,” 92.

⁸⁸ See St. Teresa’s description in the Seventh Dwellings of a feeling “that her soul was divided” (*Interior Castle*, 211 [7.1.10]), as well as her differentiation of soul and spirit: “So subtle is the division perceptible between them that sometimes the operation of the one seems as different from that of the other as are the respective joys that the Lord is pleased to give them. It seems to me, too, that the soul is a different thing from the faculties and that they are not all one and the same” (*Interior Castle*, 212 [7.1.11]). See also Howells, “The Interior and Exterior Faculties and Senses,” in *John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila*, 74–80.

⁸⁹ See de Certeau’s understanding of mystic speech as a double cleavage: “The initial division separates the *said* (what has been or is stated) from the *saying* (the act of speaking . . .). The second, produced by ‘spiritual’ labor, cuts into the density of the world to make of it a *dialogic* discourse: *I* and *thou* seeking one another in the thickness of the same language . . . *I* and *thou*: two terms whose difference, regained and maintained, will be lost in the relation that posits them” (“Mystic Speech,” 90; see above, nn. 10, 81).

⁹⁰ “Utterance” in its archaic sense means “the last extremity; the end; death; outrance [*Obs.*]” (*Webster’s International Dictionary of the English Language* (Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam and Sons, 1909) 1589. Note the etymology: “ME < OF *outrance*, *oultrance* = *oultre(er)* (to) pass beyond (< L *ultra* beyond) + *-ance* = *ANCE*” (*The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, College Edition [New York, N. Y.: Random House, 1968] 1449).

⁹¹ Compare de Certeau’s discourse on desire and this coincidence of empty and full, both to Diotima’s speech on Love [*Eros*] as the child of Poverty and Plenty (Plato, *Symp.* §202d–204c) and to Dionysius the Areopagite’s description of the divine eros as having powers of unifying and binding. In Dionysius, desire for God, or the divine eros, “binds the things of the same order in a mutually regarding union. It moves the superior to provide for the subordinate, and it stirs the subordinate in a return toward the superior. This divine yearning brings ecstasy so that the lover belongs not to self but to the beloved. . . . This is why the great Paul, swept along by his yearning for God and seized of its ecstatic power, had this inspired word to say: ‘It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives

tional place (the “I”) as a space of renunciation, of a will that “wants *nothing*” (*nihil volo*), binding itself to that desire for God which “God must will for me.”⁹² By giving form to “a desire ‘tied to no-thing’” this *volo* does not “imply a particular object,” but instead declares its want: “I only want *God*.”⁹³ In this coincidence of “wants,” a coincidence expressive of the metonymic movement of desire and lack,⁹⁴ St. Teresa’s silkworm spins its cocoon that both enshrouds and incubates the soul, a soul inhabiting the apophatic space of “an exile and a disappearance.”⁹⁵ Offering representation for the dialectic of displacement and deferral inherent in signification, a dialectic that reiterates the metonymy of desire and lack within the human subject, St. Teresa’s image of the silk cocoon incorporates a language of eros and of absence, of effulgence and of loss. Her description of the state of hiddenness and death of the soul in Christ lends credence to de Certeau’s writing of this space of renunciation as “speak[ing] of a disappearance (ecstasy) or death that constitutes the subject as *pleasure* [*jouissance*] in the other.”⁹⁶ For St. Teresa this other, this pleasure, is Christ, who is both the sphere and the womb of creation, and the eternal Word birthed in the innermost chamber of the soul, in a “night more lovely than the dawn.”⁹⁷

Beckoning the infinite beauty of reconciliation in Christ, St. Teresa’s image of the silkworm embodies a discourse on veiling and revealing light, one that conflates opacity and transparency, night and dawn, oscillating on the threshold between interiority and exteriority. The silkworm’s cocoon charts a space in language that intertwines the imagery of a visible, external geography with that of an inner landscape; it heralds a vital space of liminality as it articulates the land, the light, the dark, existing without and within the soul. The cocoon that the soul has spun around itself becomes an enclosure wherein an eclipse of the self takes place in the soul surrendering in union with God. Demarcating a site “‘empty of world’ where the *other* speaks,” St. Teresa’s silken cocoon is indeed, as de Certeau writes, “a space one must ‘enter when one is in it already,’ a place where one dwells without

in me.” (*De divinis nominibus* 4.709D–712A. I take this translation from *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works* [trans. Colm Luibheid; New York, N.Y.: Paulist Press, 1987] 81–82).

⁹² De Certeau, “Mystic Speech,” 92.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, my hyphenation.

⁹⁴ I refer here to Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, which posits the unconscious functioning as does a language. Lacan aligns desire to the metonymic displacement of one signifier leading to another in an endless chain of signifiers. He addresses this “nothing” not as an eschatological promise but as the Real; we open onto the Real, “Nothing,” where the truth lies and which never enters into the symbolic—when it does, it is always already interpreted. See *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis* (trans. Alan Sheridan; London: Hogarth Press, 1977) 20–21, 56–60, 67–78, 278 (Desire), 279–280 (Imaginary, Symbolic, Real).

⁹⁵ As de Certeau describes it: “The ‘I’ is ‘formed’—by its act of willing *nothing* or by (forever) *being capable of doing* what it wills—as a ‘desire’ bound only to the supposed desire of a Deity. It is created by the state of being nothing but the affirmation of a will” (“Mystic Speech,” 92).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 97; St. John of the Cross, “The Ascent of Mount Carmel,” *Collected Works*, 358–59.

dwelling there—and whose center is also exteriority (God)."⁹⁸ Her Prayer of Union thus becomes the locus of an originary speech "contemporaneous to the act of creation," the locus of a language born not in a "finite space that has no place of its own," but in an interlocution wherein God "allows Himself to be apprehended in this kind of union."⁹⁹ It is a union that displaces *nothing*, tracing the passion of a certainty born in darkness, the certainty of a soul coming into signification—in and through the Word—and cleaving to Christ in prayer.

In this event of union that reconciles opposites and displaces *nothing*, there is room to ponder the activity of the silkworm as a process of building from the inside out. Resounding the appeal to build wisely upon rock and not sand (Matt 7:24–27), St. Teresa's organic and architectural metaphor instructs a durative spinning of desire into a shielding shelter of silk. The repetitive labor of its making acts as a sign of humble service, a self-emptying wrought in the soul's union through prayer, which "we ourselves spin."¹⁰⁰ Constructing a corporeal cloister from an interior site for which the body serves as measure, the silkworm is both an agent of procreation and a center from which the threads of enclosure emerge. Recall St. Teresa's description of the silkworms that spin their silk "with their tiny mouths . . . making themselves very tight little cocoons, in which they bury themselves,"¹⁰¹ which suggests not only the obedience and autonomy inherent in this self-burial, but, too, the materiality of an utterance coming forth from the mouth of the soul, uniting word and act in a silent speaking that incorporates the pathos of the soul's accretion and dissolution. The cocoon of Christ, which permits the interment and elignment of the soul, becomes the founding of a singular space—the soul as subject ("I"), "an island of utterance" where, de Certeau suggests, "change serves as a foundation and saying loss is another beginning."¹⁰²

It is an articulate beginning, drawn between word and creation, kenosis and incarnation. The silkworm's process enacts in metaphor the emergence of the soul, the birth of the human subject, as the emergence of speech—an annunciative authority spun in silk and inscribing the "I" in the midst of the other, an intersubjectivity conceived in and through the interceding Word (Rom 8:34).¹⁰³ In St. Teresa's analogy of the silkworm, the soul is both mouth and word, a corporeal utterance (see Jer 15:19; John 1:14) through which, and for which, the cocoon as island is

⁹⁸ De Certeau, "Mystic Speech," 95.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 94, 89; *Interior Castle*, 106 (5.2.5).

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 105 (5.2.5).

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 104 (5.2.2).

¹⁰² *Ibid.*; Michel de Certeau, "Mystic Speech," 96, 100.

¹⁰³ De Certeau asks: "Is the 'I' a fiction of the other, which offers itself in its place? . . . 'I is an other'—that is the secret told by the mystic long before the poetic experience of Rimbaud, Rilke, or Nietzsche. . . . At the heart of mystic writing, there is something other that comes without reason: the poem and, secondarily, the dream. A 'there is'—'es gibt', it gives (Heidegger)—is the beginning" (*Ibid.*, 96–97).

spun. Remembering St. Teresa's spherical conception of the crystalline castle, the silkworm's cloister becomes the vessel within which a vigilant body and soul unite in Christ (see John 3:6)—reconciling two seeming opposites to engender a personhood, one that “gives body to the advent of a measure,”¹⁰⁴ a Christic measure that incorporates death into resurrected life (see Phil 3:10). Here, in the means of metaphor, the continual, metonymic threading of the cocoon testifies to the soul's steadfast desire for God, its material continuity indicative of the resurrection of [the body in] Christ.¹⁰⁵ St. Teresa's words of encouragement to her sisters, “Let the silkworm die—let it die, as in fact it does when it has completed the work which it was created to do,”¹⁰⁶ thus exhibit a complex concern for a newness of life, a life informed in the crucible of Christ, birthed in death and emergent in light (see Rom 6:4).¹⁰⁷

■ I as Other

“And now,” St. Teresa writes, “let us see what becomes of this silkworm, for all that I have been saying about it is leading up to this.”¹⁰⁸ St. Teresa continues, “I tell you truly, the very soul does not know itself,” extolling the greatness of God that such a miracle should be accomplished in a union of very short duration: the soul as silkworm, hidden with Christ and having renounced the world, “comes right out of the cocoon a beautiful white butterfly.”¹⁰⁹ Exemplifying the interface that Michel de Certeau addresses in the language of “I is an other,”¹¹⁰ the soul's lack of recognition conveys the interceding presence of God, an alterity that has penetrated the soul and is transforming it from the inside out. Miming the doubleness, the division of the soul, the subject, and of signification, de Certeau's image of the “I”

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 97, quoting Christiane Rabant-Lacôte, “L'enfer des musiciens,” *Musique en jeu* 9 (1972) 30, full article 22–32. Earlier, in describing the poet as “the utterer of this founding act of nomination,” de Certeau cites Heidegger's conception of the poet as making “way for the ‘event of the advent’ of which time is *robbed*” (“Mystic Speech,” 97; Martin Heidegger, *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung* [Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1951]).

¹⁰⁵ In her chapter “The Body/Soul Relationship and the Significance of Body,” Caroline Walker Bynum speaks of the theory of “material continuity” in the resurrection of the body and writes: the “concept of person as soul *and* body (or, in modern parlance, a psychosomatic unity) undergirds scholastic discussions of such topics as bodily resurrection, miracles, embryology, asceticism, Christology and the Immaculate Conception” (*Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* [New York, N.Y.: Zone Books, 1992] 222–29, at 228 and 223).

¹⁰⁶ *Interior Castle*, 106 (5.2.6).

¹⁰⁷ “Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”

¹⁰⁸ *Interior Castle*, 106 (5.2.7).

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 104 (5.2.2).

¹¹⁰ “One may legitimately ask whether the psychological person, far from expressing itself in the personal pronoun, is not rather ‘an effect of utterance.’ However that may be, it remains to be known *who* or *what* says ‘I’. Is the ‘I’ a fiction of the other, which offers itself in its place? . . . ‘I is an other’ — . . .” (De Certeau, “Mystic Speech,” 96).

as other recapitulates this originary creation, a creation accomplished in Christ, through the Word that was in the beginning with God (John 1:2). Though the Prayer of Union is of short duration, St. Teresa assures her sisters that the affect of the soul's intimacy with Christ exceeds comparison; it is an overflowing commensurate with the soul's previous withdrawal, producing what St. Teresa describes as "the most vehement desires for penance, for solitude, and for all to know God."¹¹¹ In this newborn otherness, the white butterfly of the soul recognizes its foreignness to the things of this world. Exiled and displaced, unable to return from whence it came, the soul resides in a liminal space of trials that are "of such sublimity and come from so noble a source that, severe though they are, they bring peace and contentment."¹¹² Grieved by the world's callousness and offense to God, the purified soul is the image of a newly conceived alignment of self to other, wrought in a self-emptying for the sake of the other, for the soul has "delivered itself into His hands and His great love has so completely subdued it that it neither knows nor desires anything save that God shall do with it what He wills."¹¹³ As Michel de Certeau reiterates, the soul's will "wants *nothing*" (*nihil volo*)," which "binds itself to that desire for God which 'God must will for me.'"¹¹⁴ Newly incarnate yet possessing the freedom to fly, the soul and its desire for God receive further definition through St. Teresa's use of one final, resonant analogy.

In closing chapter 2 of the Fifth Dwellings, St. Teresa employs the analogy of a wax seal, soft and completely receptive to God's touch.¹¹⁵ Conveying the qualities of interiority and enclosure in the sense-imaginary of a *being-sealed*, St. Teresa's analogy of the wax seal confirms a baptismal covenant that instructs the emergence of the soul, in and through the Word, as the emergence of the human subject into the ethical ground and substance of language. As with St. Teresa's description of

¹¹¹ *Interior Castle*, 106 (5.2.7).

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 108 (5.2.10).

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 109 (5.2.12).

¹¹⁴ De Certeau, "Mystic Speech," 92.

¹¹⁵ The image of the seal provides one final parallel between St. Teresa and Dionysius the Areopagite, *De divinis nominibus* 2.5–6 (644A–C). Dionysius uses the example of a seal (σφραγίς) and its capacity to share in the archetype of the seal, in order to describe creaturely receptivity and participation in God: "The substances which receive a share of the seal are different. Hence the impressions of the one entire identical archetype are different. If the substances are soft, easily shaped, and smooth, if no impression have been made on them already, if they are not hard and resistant, if they are not excessively soft and melting, the imprint on them will be clear, plain, and long-lasting. But if the material is lacking in this receptivity, this would be the cause of its mistaken or unclear imprint or of whatever else results from the unreceptivity of its participation" (*Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, 63). On the subject of "touch," de Certeau describes St. John of the Cross's "canciones" as being "of such 'breadth and plenty' (*archura y copia*) that they 'touch' (*toca*: burn and penetrate) everything." He asserts that "this *abundancia* is best guaranteed and most readable in the Scriptures, but it is not more real or efficient there than it is in the poem. *The same* abundance 'touches' the poet today as touched the inspired writers of antiquity." ("Mystic Speech," 98). See also Matt 3:11: "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire."

the accretion and dissolution of the soul, her analogy of a seal lends visible form to the dialectic of presence and its deferral through the evocative form of an impression—a hollow and inverted form that incorporates the sense of being turned inside out.¹¹⁶ It is an image that implies the presence of a mirror, one that inverts otherness, exteriority (God), into the hollow, interior dimension of a “siteless site,” found and founded, in the innermost center of the soul. This apophatic seal appears as a promise and remains as a mark of God’s union with the soul, for the soul is now “sealed with His seal”—the Holy Spirit (John 6:27; 2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13)—such that it recognizes itself as God’s alone. In this ambivalent icon of the seal, which offers testimony to a love as strong as death and a passion as fierce as the grave (Song 8:6),¹¹⁷ one can envision the soul cleaving to a certainty of God’s presence even in God’s absence, for the soul is now sealed in Christ, created in the image and likeness of God.

■ Reconciling the Subject

St. Teresa’s analogies of the silkworm and of the seal in the Prayer of Union formally represent the soul as a new creation, one that lives the revelatory dialectic expressed by St. Paul: “It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me” (Gal 2:20). As the soul moves from the state of interior hiddenness and lack of recognition of self, to self-knowledge and an exterior witness that testifies to the other and to a will beyond one’s own (1 Cor 9:2), its metamorphosis and incipient union with God both incorporate and re-present the birth, death and resurrection of Christ (see Phil 2:5–8; Rom 6:4). St. Teresa’s Prayer of Union offers representation for the Christological nature of the soul’s first union with God, a union that inscribes the act of creation intrinsic to the formation of the human as subject, a subject created in God’s image and through God’s word. Through the double-sealing of the soul to God, God to the soul—a union and differentiation in which the Chalcedonian union of two natures in Christ resounds: “with the difference of the natures not at all removed for the sake of the union”—St. Teresa’s white butterfly receives the gift of suffering God’s will, of “fulfilling the obligation of obedience to Him and showing His love for His neighbor.”¹¹⁸ In this sense, St. Teresa’s exposition on the Prayer of Union, a prayer that cleaves the soul to God in Christ leaving the certitude

¹¹⁶ Visual analogy may be drawn to the inverted perspective pictorially constructed within an icon, a perspective which aims to give “the onlooker a vision of the spiritual, rather than of the material realm” (Cavarnos, *Guide to Byzantine Iconography*, 37). N.B. the similarity of the seal to the cocoon, as both are dialectical images/forms constructed from the inside out.

¹¹⁷ “Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is as strong as death, passion fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame.”

¹¹⁸ *Interior Castle*, 110 (5.2.14). St. Teresa expresses this as a question in relation to Jesus Christ: “What, then, would His majesty feel when He found Himself able to prove so amply to His Father how completely He was fulfilling the obligation of obedience to Him and showing His love for His neighbor?”

of God's presence in its wake, cultivates a discourse on charity and on the ethical responsibility of utterance, in act and in word, as a seal of witness between soul and God, self and neighbor.

In light of this apostolic witness, St. Teresa's Prayer of Union circumscribes an island of intercession and interlocution, one that orients the immanent and the transcendent along an incarnate horizon—the horizon of a human personhood—created in a union that separates, forged in the cross of a double alignment to God and to neighbor (see Phil 2:8). This horizon of personhood in which aesthetic and ethical spheres coalesce is envisioned here as a cleavage of subjectivity, one that seals the soul in the heart of a sacred humanity eternally subject to the other. It is a double cleavage constituted in a living dialectic of erasure and response, in the passion of proximity and loss, reconciling perceived opposites in a beauty that “can only be gained by abandoning everything” (see Phil 2:8; Gal 3:27–28).¹¹⁹ St. Teresa's Prayer of Union elucidates this Christic beauty and its ethical imperative within the silken veil of metaphor, representing in language the dialectic of self and other at the core of human subjectivity and signification—a dialectic engraved in the soul, nourished in the body, and perfected in the province of contemplative prayer. As a way of acting and a form of speech, this prayer enunciates the ongoing formation of the human as a personhood inscribed in the Word, that Word which “gives body to the advent of a measure,” a human measure, one that writes itself in the plenitude of a loss which realizes that “to know *nothing* is everything.”¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ St. Teresa of Avila, *The Life of St. Teresa of Avila, By Herself* (London: Penguin Books, 1957) 145.

¹²⁰ St. Teresa of Avila, *The Way of Perfection* (trans. E. Allison Peters; New York: Image Books, 1964) 160 (my emphasis).

Notes and Observations

A Proposed Rereading of P.Oxy. 654 line 41 (*Gos. Thom. 7*)*

Simon Gathercole

University of Aberdeen

The Coptic text of the *Gospel of Thomas* is paralleled in three sections by Greek fragments from Oxyrhynchus. P.Oxy. 655, in the Houghton Library at Harvard, consists of small amounts of text, which correspond to sayings 24 and 36–39. P.Oxy. 1, in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, is a fragment of a codex containing sayings 26–33 (cf. also saying 77). This latter exemplar in particular shows that—with some exceptions—there is a good deal of correspondence between the Greek and Coptic versions, and therefore that it is quite possible that substantial portions of the Coptic version of *Thomas* go back to a Greek original.

This is also the case with the fragment in the British Library in London (P.Oxy. 654 = Pap 1531 verso), which parallels substantial portions of the beginning of *Thomas*. After the *incipit* and sayings 1–6, however, the Greek text then runs almost completely dry. This is unfortunate, because the next saying is one of the Coptic text's most enigmatic statements: “Jesus said, ‘Blessed is the lion which the man eats, and the lion becomes man; and cursed is the man whom the lion eats, and the lion becomes man.’” (*Gos. Thom. 7*).¹ We have only a very small amount of Greek

* I am particularly grateful to Prof. Larry Hurtado (University of Edinburgh), Dr. Peter Head (University of Cambridge), and Dr. Peter Williams (University of Aberdeen) for their invaluable advice in the preparation of this article, and to Dr. Andrea Clarke and Mr. Michael Boggan of the British Library for their assistance in consulting the manuscript.

¹ Coptic: πεχε τε ουνακαριος πε πμογει παει ετε πρωνε ναογονη αυω ητε πμογει ωωπε ρρωνε αυω ρρητ· ηδι πρωνε παει ετε πμογει ναογονη αυω πμογει ναωωπε ρρωνε. For the published text and Thomas Lambdin's translation, see *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7: together with XIII, 2**, *Brit. Lib. Or. 4926(1)*, and *P. OXY. 1, 654, 655: with contributions by many scholars: Gospel according to Thomas, Gospel according to Philip, Hypostasis of the Archons, and Indexes* (ed. Bentley Layton; vol. 1 of 2; NHS 20; Leiden: Brill, 1989) 52–93, at 56–57. The photograph

text to compare with the Coptic at this point; the last three lines of the fragment contain only ten or a dozen clearly legible letters.²



P. Oxy. 654 lines 40-42

καρι[ος] εστιν

]ω εστ[ι

]ιν[

Grenfell and Hunt

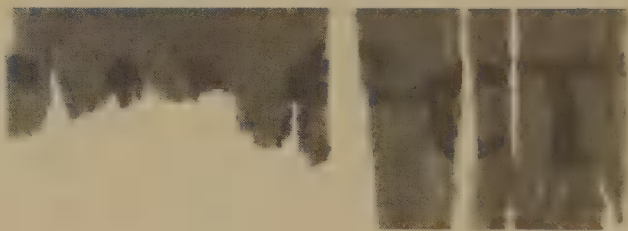
καρι[ος] εστιν

λε]ων εστα[ι

]ον[

Attridge

The top line above (l. 40) can be partially reconstructed as μακάριος ἐστιν, as is reflected in the Coptic ογηακαριος πε. On the next line, the ω of the *editio princeps* is problematic, however. To suppose with Grenfell and Hunt that this indicates an omega would—by comparison with other omegas in P.Oxy. 654—make (a) the curvature at the top of the letter rather asymmetrical, (b) the left “half” of the letter almost twice the width of the right half, and (c) the letter very wide:



It is perhaps this consideration, in conjunction with the Coptic text, which has led to Attridge’s different reconstruction of the line; he proposes reading [λέ]ων ἔστα[ι]. However, again, the ink at the upper-left of line 41 renders this reading difficult to the point of impossibility.³ Having examined the manuscript using a binocular microscope, both my colleague Dr. Peter Williams and I observed that the small trace of ink at the upper-leftmost point of line 41 inclines slightly downward, as is also apparent from the image above.⁴ Attridge’s proposal of a nu before the epsilon is plausible, but to suggest an omega before such a nu does not appear feasible.

of the Coptic text of Gos. Thom. 7 can be found in *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices. Codex II* (ed. James M. Robinson; Leiden: Brill, 1974) 42–63, at 43. The most important treatment is Howard Jackson, *The Lion Becomes Man: The Gnostic Leontomorphic Creator and the Platonic Tradition* (SBLDS 81; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985).

² For the *editio princeps*, see *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri: Part 4* (ed. Bernard P. Grenfell & Arthur S. Hunt; London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1904) 1–22, at 3, 9, and Plate I. For the most widely used recent edition, see Harold W. Attridge, “Appendix: The Greek Fragments,” in Layton, *Nag Hammadi Codex*, 113–25.

³ The alpha is also rather optimistic, to say the least.

⁴ We examined the manuscript on December 22, 2005.

Reading right to left, the tau, sigma and epsilon are clear (εστ). But the possibilities for the preceding three traces of ink are not numerous. We may proceed first to identify which letters are possible purely on the basis of the script; then we can narrow this down to what seems plausible in Greek; finally, we may speculate on which may be a good fit with the Coptic.

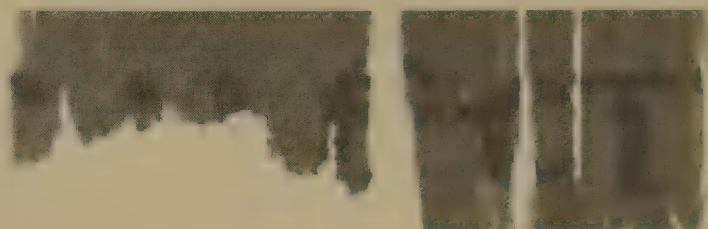
First, then, of the three traces, the first is most likely to be part of a letter distinct from the second and third, since there is no letter in our scribe's alphabet which would enable the first two traces to be taken together. In this first trace, the downward curve might speak in favor of E, K, Σ, or Υ. Of these, epsilon is almost certainly ruled out by the absence of evidence for the middle bar of the letter; compare the bar in the visible epsilon above. Sigma remains a possibility, but, overall, sigmas in the fragment tend to be written very small; the trace here is quite high. The second and third traces of ink lie so close together that it is difficult to imagine that they constitute two separate letters; they could form part of H, M, or N. On the other hand, alpha and iota appear typically joined up in this fragment, so AI is another option. This gives as possible the following combinations:

KH	KM	KN	KAI
ΣH	ΣM	ΣN	ΣAI
ΥH	ΥM	ΥN	ΥAI

Second, considering the real options in Greek, many of these combinations do not inspire much confidence as word-endings before εσται or εστιν.⁵ The first column (those ending in -H) could point in the direction of a feminine nominative or dative singular noun or adjective, or alternatively a verb in a 2nd singular middle form or a 3rd singular aorist subjunctive. We can probably rule out the second and third columns, except for -ον, which might suggest an accusative singular, or οὖν, or even—for the whole visible line—a form of σύνειμι. The fourth column could similarly make for a feminine nominative plural form (noun or adjective), or some form of an aorist infinitive (especially in the case of -σαι). Καί is also an option.

Third, moving on to hypothesizing as to the correspondence with the Coptic, the most likely possibility is—rather boringly—καί. Feminine nouns or adjectives would be somewhat out of place here: the only characters involved are lions (λέων = masculine) and people (ἄνθρωπος = masculine). Another verb seems unlikely immediately before εσται/εστιν, and particularly so if one takes into account the Coptic parallel. However, the ten other instances of the word καί in the fragment support such a reading here in line 41. For the sake of brevity, we will present the upper-most parts of five of the clearest examples below our fragmentary line:

⁵ It is possible that there is no form of the verb “to be” here, and that εστ instead forms part of a superlative or of something else altogether. In such a case, not only is the conclusion below wrong, but the problem is ultimately insoluble.



l.41:



l.3:



l.7:



l.26:



l.31:



l.34:

If the second and third traces seem a trifle close together to form an alpha-iota here, this can be explained by the fact that the writing in line 41 appears relatively small compared to that of most of the rest of the fragment. So *καί* is probably the best fit, since (a) it could stand without any difficulty before a form of the verb “to be,” and (b) there are three instances of *αγω* (‘and’) in the Coptic. Certainty on the matter is of course impossible, but it does seem clear that the two previous proposals are fraught with difficulty, and that the present suggestion is at least preferable to them.

Does this reconstruction help us to assess how close the Greek text might be to the Coptic? Certainly this is an enterprise which must be undertaken with caution, particularly when the Coptic has played a role in the reconstruction of the Greek. There is, however, one implication which can tentatively be drawn.

Attridge estimates the average line length in lines 32–39 to be roughly 31 or 32 letters. If this is right, then we have approximately 25 or 26 letters between *μακάριός ἐστιν* and our new *καί* for “the lion whom the man will eat” (*πινογει*

παει ετε πρωμε ναογομ). Attridge's restoration *exempli gratia* for this snippet of text (ὁ λέων ὃν ἄνθρωπος ἐσθίει) is thus now almost certainly too short (only 21 letters), and yet there seems little possibility of improving upon his suggestion without departing from the sense of the Coptic.⁶ It appears, then, that the Coptic is very slightly briefer than the Greek at this point.

In sum, then, our fragmentary Greek text of *Gos. Thom.* 7 has both points of similarity to, and difference from, the Coptic. Both are clearly macarisms, and as a result, a general similarity of content is very likely—as per our comments at the beginning on the degree of correspondence between the Oxyrhynchus fragments and the Coptic. However, the different lengths of the clause discussed above (if, as suspected here, the Coptic is a touch shorter than the Greek) should also alert us to be cautious about assuming that the Coptic is simply a literal rendering of something very close to our Greek fragments. As a result, this makes attempting even a restoration *exempli gratia* in this case an extremely hazardous, and probably superfluous, enterprise.

⁶ Reading φάγεται instead of ἐσθίει, for example, would improve the situation slightly, but only by one letter.

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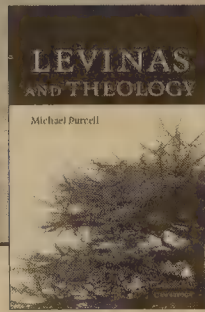
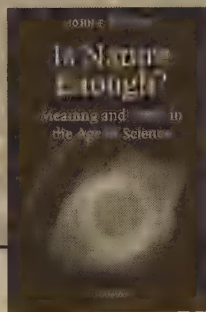
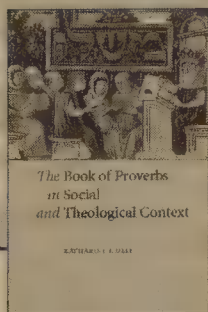
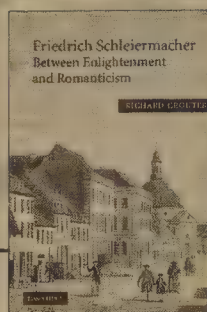
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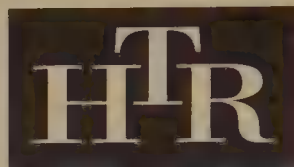
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SPECIAL ISSUE

*Honoring the
50th Anniversary of
the Admission of Women to
Harvard Divinity School
and the
25th Anniversary of the
Women's Studies in Religion Program*

Guest Editor

Ann Braude

Director of the Women's Studies in Religion Program
and Senior Lecturer in American Religious History

We are grateful to the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation
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Introduction

Ann Braude

Harvard Divinity School

In 2005–2006 Harvard Divinity School observed the fiftieth anniversary of the admission of women to the school, and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Women's Studies in Religion Program. This special issue of the *Harvard Theological Review* extends the celebration of these two anniversaries by gathering highlights of their intellectual fruit. The year-long celebration began with a convocation at which Harvard President Lawrence Summers joined Divinity School Dean William Graham and the faculty, staff and students in marking the historic anniversary. The convocation address, "A Short Half-Century: Fifty Years of Women at Harvard Divinity School," is included as the first entry in this issue. Throughout the year, distinguished alumnae delivered prestigious named lectures, and panels recalled particularly salient outcomes of women's presence. The year concluded with a session at which the first women students who entered in 1955 returned to HDS to reflect on their experiences and careers.

Together, the essays collected here suggest some of the ways in which women's participation and the introduction of gender analysis and feminist perspectives have advanced theological inquiry. Indeed it is difficult to imagine the study of religion in the twenty-first century without the signal contributions of women scholars and women's studies. Yet the *Harvard Theological Review* itself is an example of the many ways in which women contributed to the project of theological inquiry long before they were admitted to HDS as students. The *Review* came into existence as a result of an endowment left by Mildred Everett, the daughter of the Rev. Charles Carroll Everett, an HDS graduate who eventually joined the faculty as Hussey Professor of Theology and served as dean from 1878 until his death in 1900. She left the residue of her assets as a trust for a journal of theology to be edited by the Harvard Divinity School faculty. While all concerned with theological scholarship will admire her vision in selecting a purpose that must have seemed remote in contrast to more obvious charitable objects, I suspect that even so farsighted a daughter of the Divinity School could not have foreseen the issue you hold in your

hands, dedicated exclusively to contributions of those who, in her day and long after, were barred from sitting in HDS classes.

The admission of women in 1955 was not incidental to the direction theological scholarship would take. Rather their presence required significant changes in every field of education at the school. It required rethinking of the meaning of language, of translation practices, of biblical interpretation. It expanded the subject of the study of religious history and practice to include all rather than half the participants. It required rethinking of long accepted assumptions about the nature and meaning of ministry and ordination, of structures of polity and denominational governance.

The essays collected here also mark some of the historic moments that occurred during the anniversary year. In a particularly dramatic convergence, one of the first women students to enroll in 1955, Letty Mandeville Russell, professor emerita of theology at Yale Divinity School, delivered the 2006 Tillich lecture marking the 50th anniversary of Paul Tillich's arrival at Harvard in the same year. Indeed, the double jubilee was no coincidence. Both the admission of women and the presence of Paul Tillich signaled the movement of the Divinity School into the forefront of Protestant ecumenical engagement with contemporary social issues.

Other historic moments included the installation of the feminist scholar and former WSRP Research Associate Amy Hollywood in the newly endowed Elizabeth H. Monrad Professorship of Christian Studies. Her inaugural lecture, "Acute Melancholia," uses attention to texts of medieval women to provide trenchant insights into contemporary experience. Another signal event was the delivery by Susannah Heschel (MTS '76), Eli Black Associate Professor of Jewish Studies at Dartmouth College, of the 2006 Duddleian Lecture, "From Jesus to Shylock: Christian Supersessionism and 'The Merchant of Venice.'"

Two essays included here began as lectures delivered by Research Associates in the Women's Studies in Religion Program. Rosemary Carbine's "*Ekklesial* Work: Toward a Feminist Public Theology" builds on the concept of an "*ekklesia* of wo/men" elaborated by Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Krister Stendahl Professor of Divinity, to explore its repercussions for discussions of civic life. Constance Furey's "The Self Undone: Individualism and Relationality in John Donne and Aemilia Lanyer" introduces her work on devotional poetry in Renaissance England.

This special issue also notes the ways theological scholarship has been enhanced and expanded by women's participation over the last 50 years by including a list of all the Harvard doctoral dissertations on religion completed by women. Perusal of the list indicates that while many of the early women doctorates would go on to be leaders in gender analysis, the first dissertation explicitly focused on gender was Polly Wynn Allen's "The Social Ethics of Charlotte Perkins Gillman" in 1978, followed by Dorothy Austin's "Breaking the Myth of the Generic Man: The Crisis of Feminist Consciousness" in 1981. The issue concludes with an essay from one of the most notable scholars appearing on the list, Elaine Pagels, Harrington Spear Paine Foundation Professor of Religion at Princeton University.

A Short Half-Century: Fifty Years of Women at Harvard Divinity School

Ann Braude

Harvard Divinity School

Harvard Divinity School Opening Convocation Address

19 September 2005

President Summers, Dean Graham, esteemed colleagues, honored guests, students and graduates of the Divinity School, new and old. It is a great pleasure to address you on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the admission of women to Harvard Divinity School. I am particularly honored by the presence of those of you who were here in 1955 when women first enrolled as students.¹ For some of us who were not, 1955 may seem long ago—part of an archaic past of the Cold War, McCarthyism, and racial segregation, when women were welcome in few professional settings and ordained by few denominations.

But for those who remember 1955, or for any who take a long historical view, these 50 years may seem short indeed—just more than a quarter of this school's life. The fact that women have been admitted for such a brief period might easily cause embarrassment or amusement, rather than celebration. Of course, women have always been here—that is, since the founding of HDS in 1816—as staff, family members, and supporters they have cleaned the toilets, run the library, edited manuscripts, donated money, and done a hundred other things. But only in 1955 did women join the School's reason for being—matriculated students.

¹ I am grateful to the HDS graduates, faculty, and colleagues who provided information and assistance for this address. These include Polly Allen, Susan Andrews, Clarissa Atkinson, Constance Buchanan, Paula Coory, Emily Culpepper, Alice Hageman, Mary Hunt, Bobette Reed Kahn, Rena Karefa-Smart, Jean McCrae, Diane Miller, Connie Parvey, Jane Redmont, Liz Rice-Smith, Letty Russell, Gail Shulman, Brita Stendahl, Krister Stendahl, Elinor (Bunn) Thompson, Theodore Trost, Laurel Ulirich, Connie Williams, and Preston Williams. Helen Horowitz and Harvey Cox provided helpful comments on the entire text.

Harvard Divinity School was hardly a pioneer in this regard. Some of our peer institutions have admitted women for 100 years and more. Even at Harvard, the Divinity School was among the last graduate and professional schools to open its doors, though able Radcliffe students, I hasten to add, found their way into HDS classes one way or another.²

When it finally occurred, the admission of women as degree candidates was unremarkable. I asked one of the earliest women students how she learned that HDS admitted women. She said, "I assumed they did. I never gave it a thought." While women's admission to the school may appear a non-event in and of itself, it advanced the plot of a larger story, a story going back to Harvard's origins, when, as Peter Gomes has observed, the crisis of authority caused by Anne Hutchinson's theological perspicacity added urgency to the magistrates' concern to educate a cadre of men learned enough to best her intimate knowledge of the Bible and defeat her agile antinomianism.³ The story goes back still further, when, as Karen King observes, the men who hoped to hold tight the reigns of authority in the emerging structures of early Christianity discredited women apostles and leaders whose teachings and existence called for more inclusive notions of sacrality.⁴ And the story continues today, when America's largest religious groups, the Roman Catholic Church and the Southern Baptist Convention, continue to view women as disqualified by nature or by scripture from the most important religious roles. Indeed, it is this longer, larger story that made women's admission to HDS so difficult and so long in coming, and that makes its jubilee worthy of celebration. In this longer view, Harvard's decades of delay seem brief indeed, and may even serve to clarify the significance of women's presence in a way that can help us become the School we strive to be.

To sharpen our focus on the significance of women's presence, let us revisit three moments in our history: one before women were admitted and one after, as well as the day 50 years ago when women first sat among the students assembled at this convocation. At each point, I'd like to explore with you what the presence or absence of women tells us about the perennial question at the heart of this School's identity: the appropriate relationship between the academic study of religion and the professional training of religious leaders. During my relatively brief tenure on this faculty, I have variously heard this issue referred to as a subject for healthy intellectual exchange, as a somewhat contentious debate, and as a crisis. I was much reassured to find heated discussion of this topic going back over one hundred years. Today, I'd like to explore how debates about the presence of women at Harvard Divinity School, and debates about the mission of the School and the content and

² See Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, "Rewriting Harvard's History," in *Yards and Gates: Gender in Harvard and Radcliffe History* (ed. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich; New York: Palgrave, 2004) 1–13.

³ Peter Gomes, "Anne Hutchinson: Brief Life of Harvard's 'Midwife': 1595–1643" *Harvard Magazine* (2002) <http://www.harvardmagazine.com/on-line/1102194.html>.

⁴ Karen King, *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala* (Santa Rosa, Calif.: 2003) ch. 13.

goals of its curriculum shed light on each other. Let us look through the lens of gender at the School in which all of us have chosen to pursue our various vocations to see what it can tell us, both about our past and about our future.

The first moment I'd like to explore occurred in 1893. This was a heady year for religious liberals. The World's Parliament of Religions at the Columbian Exhibition in Chicago attempted to realize incipient ideals of pluralism and progress, with all their nineteenth-century limitations. Down the Midway, the University of Chicago, with a divinity school at its center, had just opened as a fully coeducational university. Alumni of Harvard Divinity School chose this moment to petition the Board of Overseers to admit women as students. Individual women had petitioned to enroll earlier, but this is the first proposal I know for institutional change. A near neighbor, Hartford Seminary, was well into its first decade of coeducation and released an upbeat report entitled, "Theological Training for Women."⁵ The Harvard committee charged to respond to the alumni petition noted that "There are many women now preaching in various denominations and it is clearly of importance that such women should receive adequate instruction before entering the ministry." Nonetheless, they found it "unwise and impracticable" to grant the petition because "in many courses graduates and undergraduates of the college outnumber the Divinity School men—in some courses forming a very large proportion of the class."⁶

In 1893 this was enough to doom the proposal, because the undesirability of women in Harvard College courses was the pillar of Harvard's policies toward women's education. It dictated the novel form of the "Harvard Annex," later known as Radcliffe College, in which women heard the same lectures delivered by the same faculty as Harvard men, but at different times and places.⁷ Charles William Eliot, the President who transformed Harvard from a strong regional college into a world leader, was firm on this issue. While we here are beneficiaries of President Eliot's wisdom, his attitudes toward women demonstrate its limits. He opposed the presence of women in Harvard classrooms precisely because he wanted to broaden the pool of men available to the academic meritocracy, including (with limits) the sons of immigrants, non-Christians, and Catholics. "Co-education does very well in communities where persons are more on an equality," he told the wife of a founding trustee of Johns Hopkins, "but in a large city where persons of all classes are thrown together, it works badly, unpleasant associations are formed, and disastrous marriages often result."⁸ Coeducation might be all right where students shared a single faith, as at Methodist Boston University, but not at an institution where, thanks to the elective system inspired by Eliot's Unitarian rationalism, young minds were free to explore. Broad and Emersonian in outlook, Eliot

⁵ *Theological Training for Women* (Hartford Theological Seminary, 1892).

⁶ Arthur T. Lyman, *Report of the Committee on the Admission of Women to Harvard Divinity School* (17 May 1893).

⁷ Sally Schwager, "The Origins of Radcliffe," in *Yards and Gates*, 87–115.

⁸ Mary Whitall Thomas quoted Eliot in a letter to her daughter, M. Carey Thomas, 10 June 1874, cited by Helen Horowitz, "The Great Debate," in *Yards and Gates*, 129.

made Harvard one of the first universities to abolish mandatory chapel and helped the Divinity School live up to the nonsectarian principles on which it had been founded.⁹

President Eliot unburdened himself on the topic of women's education at the inauguration of Caroline Hazard as president of Wellesley College. M. Carey Thomas, the Quaker president of Bryn Mawr, sat in the audience, bedecked in academic regalia. Eliot's speech, she recalled, "made me hot from head to foot."¹⁰ He described the education of women as an experiment, wondering aloud about women's intellectual capacities and about the ability of women's colleges to inculcate good manners while providing an education that would not injure women's "bodily powers and functions."

When gender entered the picture, Eliot's views of the role of religion in education changed entirely. Harvard men, Eliot believed, in both the College and the Divinity School, should be free to worship or not as their conscience dictated and should take a historical approach to the study of religion. The University should impart knowledge and foster moral development so that the individual could choose the right. Wellesley women, in contrast, should have their "religious motives and aspirations" shaped by the college, and particularly by the "simplicity, dignity, and intellectual strenuousness of Congregational worship . . . where . . . 'vain repetitions' are avoided, and the gregarious religious excitement so unwholesome for young women finds no place."¹¹ This gendered dynamic, in which the practice of religion, the continuity of tradition, and the benefits of religious authority are associated with women for whom higher education may be injurious, and the critical study of religion is associated with men for whom its practice is a private matter, provides an important backdrop for understanding what would transpire in subsequent decades. In addition, as we move on in our history, let us note a buried insight in President Eliot's anxieties about class-mixing and "unpleasant associations." His fears suggest that the admission of women connected in complicated ways with religious and ethnic diversity and had the potential to increase its impact on the School.

It would take sixty years and many ups and downs in the life of the Divinity School for the alumni proposal of 1893 to be accepted by the Harvard Corporation. We now leap to the Convocation of 1955, when women first sat as students in this assembly. The eight women degree candidates in the audience were a remarkable group. They included Letty Russell, who would go on to be one of the first women ordained in the United Presbyterian Church and one of the first Christian feminist theologians, and who would serve for over 25 years on the faculty of Yale Divinity School. They included Constance Parvey, who would be one of the first women ordained in the Lutheran Church and would produce the famous Sheffield Report

⁹ Levering Reynolds, Jr. "The Later Years (1880–1953)," in *The Harvard Divinity School: Its Place in Harvard University and in American Culture* (ed. George Huntston Williams; Boston: Beacon Press, 1954) 165–85.

¹⁰ M. Carey Thomas to Mary Garrett, 3 October 1899, as cited in Horowitz, "Great Debate," 133.

¹¹ *A Record of the Exercises Attending the Inauguration of Caroline Hazard, Litt.D. as President of Wellesley College, III October MDCCCXCIX* (Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1899) 18–19.

on the Community of Men and Women in the Churches for the World Council of Churches,¹² and who would serve for many years as chaplain at MIT. The group included Judith Hoehler, ordained as a Unitarian Universalist, who would become one of the first denominational counselors at HDS. The brilliant Marianka Fousek, who would distinguish herself as a scholar of the Roman world, was the only candidate for Doctorate of Theology (Th.D.) in the group. The inimitable Elinor Bunn Thompson came as a student and then virtually ran the school when a succession of deans relied on her experience as an editor and administrator. Emily Thornton Gage, a transfer student from Union Theological Seminary, would be the first woman to receive an HDS degree, graduating in 1957.

At that Convocation, the newly appointed Dean, Douglas Horton, chided the school for its tardiness in admitting women by remarking at the “mumbling and head shaking” that had accompanied the admission of Anna Maria Shuman to study theology at the Frisian University in Holland 300 years before. He noted that Harvard Divinity School, in 1955, was adopting the thesis Shuman had developed in her seventeenth century dissertation: that “the study of letters is becoming to a Christian woman.”¹³

Trained at the coeducational Hartford Seminary, Douglas Horton, following the death of his first wife, wed the 45-year-old president of Wellesley College, Mildred McAfee, a prominent lay leader in the Congregational Church. Many early women students lived with the Hortons on the third floor of Jewett house. If any of them wanted a model for breaking gender barriers, Mildred McAfee Horton specialized in just that. During World War II, she took leave from her presidency to become the first woman commissioned officer in the Navy as director of the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES). She excelled in electrical engineering, serving as the first female member of the boards of directors of both the Radio Corporation of America and the National Broadcasting Corporation. She also broke barriers in religion, where she served as the first woman vice president of the Federal Council of Churches. When asked her husband’s opinion at a committee meeting, she replied: “I really don’t know what it is. He is at home doing the breakfast dishes so that his wife can attend this meeting.”¹⁴

In this environment, the admission of women could hardly be questioned. The Dean’s Report of 1955 states only that the corporation accepted the recommendation of the faculty. One suspects that the faculty might have recommended it long before that—if there had been one. But in the 1940s HDS was struggling, with a part-time dean and a limited curriculum delivered primarily by members of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Interestingly, keeping women out in the 1940s merited more

¹² *The Community of Women and Men in the Church: The Sheffield Report* (ed. Constance F. Parvey; Geneva, WCC, 1983).

¹³ Rev. Douglas Horton, “The Desk and the Altar,” *Harvard Alumni Bulletin* (22 October 1955) 116.

¹⁴ Margaret Frakes, “Leading Church Women—II. Mrs. Douglas Horton,” 25 June 1952, 46.

attention in the Dean's Reports than did letting them in during the 1950s. Indulge me, if you will, while I quote from the 1949 report of Dean Willard Sperry.

"The question of the admission of women," he wrote, "is one that has come up often over the past 25 years and is sure to be reopened in the future, particularly in view of their recent admission by the Law School and the Medical School." Defending Harvard's standards of excellence, he observed: "Most women divinity students devote themselves to the field of religious education, presumably proposing to become employed in Sunday schools. We have no department of religious education as such, and there is at this moment no inclination to organize such a department, even had we the means to do so." Further, he noted, "One cannot wholly escape the rather ungenerous suspicion that many a young woman enters divinity school with the unsuspected hope that she may become a minister's wife." "Whether or not women are going to be welcome and effective as parish ministers is not a problem which we can decide. That decision will have to be made by trial and error in the churches." Dean Sperry concluded with remarkable candor, "I have no convictions and no wisdom on this matter."¹⁵

While President Eliot feared that coeducation could cause poor marriages, Dean Sperry feared it might lead to good ones, at least by the standards of his day. His comments recall the binary association of women with religious practice and men with religious ideas. Sperry's dismissal of women's place in theological education mirrored a view of the School's mission as merely academic. The Divinity School of his day offered no professional training in ministry, or even academic training in the fields of theology or ethics in the modern world. The School was not viewed as having a transformative or leading role in religion or society, or even in theological education. Rather, it provided a service to religious groups who needed leaders educated in Bible and in Christian History and doctrine. It was not a place where new questions could be raised about the future or the past and where the tools of critical inquiry could be used to answer them.

This latter view of the School, in which faculty modeled intellectual innovation and its application after national and international conversations and professional contexts, would come to the fore in the 1950s when the Divinity School was reborn under the presidency of Nathan Pusey, the deanship of Douglas Horton, and the financial support of David Rockefeller. In 1955, women entered a School staffed by a youthful cadre of brilliant international scholars who felt the full support of their Dean and President. By the end of the 1950s, three changes marked the beginning of the Divinity School's modern history: the admission of women, the founding of the Center for the Study of World Religions, and the establishment of the Department of the Church, which eventually became today's Office of Ministry Studies. Apparently unconnected, each marked a stream in the intersecting intellectual currents that would shape the School we now attend.

¹⁵ Dean's Report, 1948–1949, printed in *Official Register of Harvard University*, vol. 39: 30 April 1952, no. 10, 412–13.

The women joined in the excitement of the revitalized School. They were inspired by the leadership of their professors in encouraging a social role for the churches, as well as by their professors' participation in the international ecumenical movement that would train a key generation of leaders in civil rights and social justice. But the women soon disappeared from the Dean's Reports. While Douglas Horton at least spoke appreciatively of wives of students and faculty who had formal roles in a number of school activities in the 1950's, in the 1960's women are not mentioned at all.

The School had done an about-face since the nonactivist days of the 1940's. New departments of theology, ethics, and comparative religion brought stringent moral analysis to contemporary social issues. The school courted controversy with conferences on sexual ethics and abortion and conducted a colloquium in Washington, D.C., where students participated in a debate over black power between the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and attended congressional hearings on the Civil Rights Act. While a summer program began to encourage able African American undergraduates to enter the ministry, a faculty report found that "white concerns, attitudes and habits" pervaded the life and curriculum of the School, and the Black Caucus found the faculty report to be based upon "racist paternalistic assumptions."¹⁶ Harvey Cox published the proto-feminist *Secular City* in 1965¹⁷ and Joseph Fichter, the Stillman Professor of Roman Catholic Studies, offered the School's first course on women in the Church in 1967, before blurbing Mary Daly's 1969 book *The Church and the Second Sex*¹⁸ as "the most sophisticated, the most progressive, and the most honest of all the works that have attempted to deal with women in the church."

Harvard Divinity School was, in the words of one alum, "a happenin' place," yet it consisted almost exclusively of men, with no women on the faculty and only two or three graduating each year. Then, in 1970, the tide began to turn. Thirty-five women enrolled, almost as many as had graduated during the previous fifteen years. The catalog of that year read:

"The Divinity School considers it important to encourage women to seek theological education, including preparation for the ordained ministry. . . . Justice as well as the need for a wider spectrum of human experience in the leadership of the churches calls for an increased number of women at all levels in theological education. . . . Further developments," the catalogue explained, "depend upon the availability of women prepared for a pioneering service."

The following year fifty-six women enrolled, most in the new Master of Theological Studies degree, a number in doctoral programs, but with a critical mass in the Master of Divinity.

¹⁶ Dean's Report, 1969–1970, 212.

¹⁷ Harvey Gallagher Cox, *The Secular City: Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective* (New York: Macmillan, 1966).

¹⁸ Mary Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968).

At this moment, when feminism arose as a major force in American society and thought, three conditions made the Divinity School fertile soil for its flourishing and for the establishment of the University's first women's studies program: 1) the deanship of Krister Stendahl, 2) the presence of a talented and astute group of women students who founded the Women's Caucus, and 3) the mission and structure of the School itself, with its combined commitments to the critical study of religion, to multicultural education, and to putting theological analysis to work in social settings. Here was a place where scholars were accountable to the living communities from which students came and to which they returned. And in every one of those communities, the religious leadership of women was far more than a matter of access to education. It required a fundamental rethinking of the meaning of texts, doctrines, practices, and history in a way that was not required by women's entrance into most professional schools. The feminist assertion that the personal is political echoed through the curriculum, as students and faculty sought to understand the nature, content, and repercussions of faith commitments and practices, their own and others.

Dean Stendahl, affectionately known as "Sister Krister" by women students, was already on record supporting the ordination of women as a biblical scholar before coming to Harvard from Sweden in 1954. He had married not a college president, but another theological scholar Brita Johnson, whose father had introduced the motion for the ordination of women in the state church of Sweden to the Swedish Parliament. Against the consensus of biblical scholars, Krister Stendahl argued that the New Testament did not speak to the issue directly, in a piece that was instrumental to the successful vote in the Swedish parliament. While the Hortons provided support for women's leadership in unconventional arenas, the Stendahls were the right people at the right time to support a new innovation arising from women students: the use of gender as a category of analysis in scholarly research—women's studies.

In the fall of 1971, the Women's Caucus, consisting of women students, staff, and wives of faculty and students, began meeting weekly. Two students from the caucus responded to an assignment in Harvey Cox's course "Eschatology and Politics" with a proposal to devote two weeks of the course to women's liberation and to halt the use of the masculine pronouns "to refer to all people or to God" in class discussions. Professor Cox submitted the proposals to the class. The 80 students voted to focus both readings and discussion on women's liberation and to try the experiment with language. The instructional budget paid for the kazoos class members blew when they heard gender-exclusive language. "We chose kazoos because it made the class as a whole responsible," one student recalled. "Nobody wanted to be the language police and everyone loved the phallic symbolism." *Newsweek*¹⁹ picked up on the story after class member E. J. Dionne reported on it on the front page of the *Crimson*.²⁰ HDS students, trained in the analysis of texts, rituals, and doctrines, were attuned to subtle

¹⁹ *Newsweek*, 6 December 1971.

²⁰ *Harvard Crimson*, "Two Women Liberate Church Course," 11 November 1971.

and not-so-subtle repercussions of naming, classification, and symbolic action. When they turned their analysis to gender, the School would never be the same, and neither would the world.

That same term, women students invited Mary Daly to Linda Barufaldi's dorm room to discuss the invitation Daly had received to be the first woman ever to preach at Harvard's Memorial Church. It was there that Daly, with the students' encouragement, conceived the walkout from patriarchal religion that she led on November 14. When Daly descended the pulpit and invited others to join her in walking out, some Divinity School women followed her out of the church never to return, some followed her in an act of love and anger that would make it possible for them to walk back in on their own terms, and others remained inside, committed to using what they learned to reform institutions to which they remained loyal. Differences fueled passionate arguments among allies. Roman Catholic women studied together with women who could be ordained, those committed to ordination studied with those who rejected it as patriarchal, and those who came to the school to study religion but not to practice it confronted the value of faith in the lives of other students. "Somehow," one student recalled, "what everybody was bringing was combustible."

Lack of difference also proved to be combustible. The Women's Caucus modeled itself on the Black Caucus. Participants were conscious of both the similarity of the groups' agendas and the possibility that they could be used against each other. In 1971, women and African Americans each comprised approximately eleven percent of the student body. One student recalled that the Black Caucus was all male and the Women's Caucus all white because there were no African American women students at HDS. This was not quite true. The handful of black women who began to matriculate in the late 1960's usually identified more with black students than with other women, even though many black male students opposed the ordination of women. One of the first African American women to receive the Master of Divinity degree, Bobette Reed Kahn, had been the first black woman to graduate from Williams College and would be the second ordained in the Episcopal Church. After one year of doctoral study in Hebrew Bible, she left Harvard never to return. "I loved the Old Testament," she told me, "but I never wanted to be another first. You have no idea how hard it is." Rena Karefa-Smart, who I believe was the first African American woman to earn a Doctorate of Theology in 1976, had also been the first black woman to graduate from Yale Divinity School some 30 years before. During the 1970s, the percentage of women students at HDS would increase yearly until they became a majority in the early 1980's and stayed that way, while the percentage of African American students leveled and sometimes declined.

Dean Stendahl provided funds for a number of women students to travel to annual meetings of the American Academy of Religion at which they helped found the Women and Religion Section. A number of their term papers were published in anthologies produced by that group, including Emily Culpepper's essays on menstrual taboos

in Leviticus and Zoroastrianism.²¹ Realizing that she could spend the rest of her life analyzing negative attitudes toward menstruation, Culpepper decided to explore the subject from a positive point of view in her M.Div. thesis. Graduation requirements called for either a private examination or a public disputation of the thesis. Culpepper chose the public disputation. Her thesis consisted of a ten-minute color film entitled "Period Piece," intended to provide an alternative to President Eliot's notion that a conflict existed between the demands of higher education and women's "bodily powers and functions." The Sperry Room was packed. One student recalled sitting between two professors chattering away in German, forgetting that they had required her to learn the language. "My mother would roll over in her grave," one professor said to the other as the film alternated images of women divinity students engaged in serious intellectual activity with images of those same students inserting tampons and performing self-examinations.²²

The Dean's Report of 1972 indicates that Jean MacRae, a second year student who would soon found New Words, a feminist bookstore, was appointed as the first coordinator of women's programs. When I mentioned this to Jean, she said, "I guess my name was the one that was put down. This was a collective effort." The position of coordinator of women's programs, which would later be filled by another Women's Caucus participant, M. Brinton Lykes, was located in the recently established Office of Ministerial Studies. The first director of the Office of Ministry Studies was Patricia Budd Kepler; most of her successors would also be women. Excitement about path-breaking women's ministries enlivened the project of professional formation. In response to a proposal from the Caucus, Alice Hageman came to the school in 1972 as the Lentz Lecturer on women and ministry, and together with students, published a volume entitled *Sexist Religion and Women in the Church: No More Silence!*²³ based on fourteen guest lectures that took place that year. Rosemary Ruether also came to HDS as the Stillman Chair professor and offered the first course on feminist theology. Out of these experiences came a successful proposal from the Women's Caucus for what would eventually become the Women's Studies in Religion Program (WSRP).

Initially known as the Research-Resource Associates in Women's Studies, the program brought five scholars to the school each year with the modest assignment of transforming the sources, methods, and conclusions of the fields of study comprising the curriculum. The initial student proposal, authorized by faculty vote 16 February 1973, provided that "the group will be interracial in order to represent the experience of both black and white women." Not yet attentive to religious

²¹ Emily E. Culpepper, "Zoroastrian Menstruation Taboos: A Woman's Studies Perspective," in *Women and Religion* (ed. Judith Plaskow and Joan Arnolds; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1974) 199–210.

²² Emily Erwin Culpepper, *Menstruation Manta: Red, Crimson, Sienna, Scarlet* (Harvard Divinity School M.Div. Senior Project, 1974).

²³ Alice Hageman, ed. *Sexist Religion and Women in the Church: No More Silence* (New York: Association Press, 1974).

diversity, the program in its early years nevertheless brought a stream of African American scholars including Jaqueline Grant and Katie Geneva Cannon. These formative figures in womanist theology helped attract a dynamic cohort of students who would make black women an important presence during the 1980's, including Karen Baker Fletcher, who delivered the 2006 William James Lecture, and Chandra Taylor Smith, the most recent president of the HDS Alumni/ae Association.

But now I have entered the 1980's and wandered beyond the story I promised to tell. History teaches that I ought not exceed the allotted time. Thus I shall have to forgo speaking of the first women faculty, historian Caroline Walker Bynum and Islamicist Jane Smith, of the remarkable contributions of Associate Dean Constance Buchanan, of the first woman to receive tenure, theologian Margaret Miles, in 1983, or of the conference Diana Eck convened in the same year, "Women, Religion and Social Change," in which 70 women from around the world gathered at the Center for the Study of World Religions. Nor can I speak of the first woman appointed to a named chair in 1988, when the feminist biblical scholar Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza became Krister Stendahl Professor of Divinity. Today is the jubilee of women students, so they have been our focus. It is because of their imagination, intelligence, and hard work that women's studies came to this school. Now a third of our faculty teach and publish in the field of gender, many of them graduates of the school or former advisers or scholars of the women's studies program.

Perhaps the most important lesson of viewing the history of our school through the lens of gender has to do with the intellectual benefits of being an outsider. If you feel like an outsider to this august institution, you are in very good company. Almost everyone I know feels like an outsider here, either because of their religious commitments or their lack of them, because of the particular background and vantage point from which they approach the study of religion, their disciplinary commitments, their national origin, their race, or their sexual orientation, or all of the above. Participants in the Women's Caucus wore their outsiderhood proudly, they trumpeted it from kazoos, displayed it on panels in the hallways, and projected it on the screen in the Sperry Room. Certainly, the critical mass of women students enabled them to overcome the most painful aspects of isolation—their path may not, or may not yet, be open to all students. Yet their sense of outsiderhood enlivened conversations, fueled creativity, and engendered a profound level of commitment to the school. They proved many times over Virginia Woolf's observation about the admission of women to British universities, that it is better to be locked out than to be locked in. This is a sentiment with which any intellectual can agree, but it has particular salience for this school, which makes the audacious claim to study religion from a nonsectarian viewpoint, a mission that challenges us daily to consider the ways in which we may still be locked in.

Every religion accounts for gender as part of a created order, and we all live with the repercussions. Religion's role in constructing, maintaining, distorting, and subverting gender is played out every day in headlines and in homes and

schools throughout the world; in debates over birth control, abortion, and family violence that spill into both domestic and foreign policy; in debates about the Iraqi constitution and the American invasion of Afghanistan; about the nature of marriage; about health, law, development, and globalization. We at Harvard Divinity School have chosen to be actors rather than bystanders in this drama by taking gender as an arena for critical investigation rather than as a given. While we have much left to do, we pause today to celebrate what we have accomplished in this short half-century.

Acute Melancholia

Amy Hollywood

Harvard Divinity School

*The inaugural lecture of the Elizabeth H. Monrad Chair in Christian Studies at
Harvard Divinity School, 2 March 2006*

Before melancholy, gratitude. First to Elizabeth and Ernest Monrad, for their countless gifts to Harvard University and, today in particular, to the Divinity School. It is a great honor to hold the Elizabeth H. Monrad Chair in Christian Studies and I hope I can do so in ways that at least partially reflect the grace and generosity of the chair's namesake and of its donors. My gratitude to Bill Graham, Dean of the Divinity School, is enormous, both for his professional confidence in me and for his persistent and inspiring vision of what Harvard Divinity School is and can be. It is wonderful to be here and for that I thank my colleagues—the faculty, administration, staff, and students of HDS. And finally, for helping me think through this particular bit of work, special thanks to Constance Furey, Stephanie Paulsell, and Melissa Zeiger.

My topic today is perhaps sadder than is fitting for a happy occasion, the celebration of a new institutional site for scholarship, thought, and teaching. But I wanted to present to you, in this inaugural moment, a piece of my current work and that work is, for reasons that will emerge as I speak, about the implacability of grief and our inability ever fully to let go of those we love. It is also about how, if we are lucky, the others we refuse to lose enable us to live. As an exiled and ill Sigmund Freud wrote to the poet H.D. (she and her daughter Perdita had sent him a flowering plant for his eightieth birthday): “Life at my age is not easy, but spring is beautiful and so is love.”¹ Without love, there is no grief. Perhaps, I’ll suggest today, with Freud and a host of others much wiser than myself, without grief there is no love.

¹ H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), *Tribute to Freud* (New York: New Directions, 1974) 194.

No one in my family can tell one story without telling twenty-five stories, not just because one story inevitably leads to another, but also because any given story is embedded with endless digressions, only seemingly incidental anecdotes, all wending their way toward some grand narrative finale, which tends never quite to arrive. (As my students know, this also tends to be the way I teach.) I am going to give you today the abbreviated, non-digressive version of the story of my paternal great-grandmother, Maria Hollywood. (It will be—for me, at least—incredibly difficult.)

My mother is the one who told this story, one she had from my Grandfather Hollywood. His mother, after whom I was unwittingly named (here is the first long, omitted digression, and I promise now to stop marking each of them), my great-grandmother, starved herself to death. She lived in lower Manhattan. Her bartender husband, my great-grandfather, Patrick, died young, leaving her with those of their eight children who remained alive at the time. My grandfather, Joseph, graduated from the sixth grade just after his father died, left school, and worked to support his mother and younger brothers and sisters. First he sold newspapers. For reasons that never were made clear to me, he became interested in chemistry, taught himself a bit about it, and went to work for a chemical salesman who had connections with the papers. Eventually, he co-owned a chemical sales business and made a decent amount of money (which all dissipated rapidly after his death). But that was later. Through his twenties he lived with his mother and one remaining sister, until, when she was sixteen, that last sister, Mary, died. And when Mary died, his mother, my great-grandmother, Maria, stopped eating, refused doctors, and she too died.

There is something awful now in thinking about my mother telling me this story when I was just a small child. But the truth is, I loved my mother's stories, even when they involved starving Irish grannies and impecunious youth, maybe in part because I never quite believed them. Now I can see all the key narrative elements—Horatio Alger meets *Newsies* meets a certain much beloved (to Irish Americans at least) strand of melodramatic Gothic.

So I loved the story—or was at least fascinated by it—and later could analyze its religious, political, ethnic, and gender implications, and the play of power, oppression, desire, and anxiety that ran through each episode (and perhaps even more, provided the conditions of its telling). On some fundamental level, though, the older I got, the less I believed it.

But the thing is, it turned out to be true. After my father died, I opened the grey lock box that I had seen on his desk for years (and oddly, given that I had rifled through every other available object in the house, had never touched). I remember only two of the documents that were in the box: my father's flight record from World War II (it was the original flight record, now lost) and a copy, now also lost, of my great-grandmother's death certificate. Maria Smith (therein lies yet another complex story) Hollywood died at the age of fifty-five. The cause of death: acute melancholia.

I tell this story — about the power of loss literally to kill — because it serves as a cautionary backdrop for my current research. From medieval Christian mysticism to psychoanalysis and contemporary feminist philosophy — an odd array, I grant — I have learned that one way we deal with loss is through an internalization of the lost other, who then becomes part of who we are. I am interested in the bodily, psychic, spiritual, and mental practices by which we are formed and reformed; in the role of loss and incorporation in those practices; and in the ways in which they give rise to forms of subjectivity that are always and necessarily intersubjective. (And also always and necessarily, although in complex ways, sexed, gendered, sexualized, raced, and marked by the other salient differences that constitute the social worlds of which we are a part.)

It is not an accident, of course, that the relationship between mourning, melancholia, and Christian mysticism first became starkly apparent to me — it had always been, I can now see, a crucial, yet under-theorized aspect of my work — the year that one of my brothers and one of my sisters were both very ill. I was, inevitably, thinking about mourning and melancholia and, less inevitably, reading Margaret Ebner's *Revelations*. There it was — the complex interactions between trauma and loss, mourning and melancholy — enacted in and by Ebner's book. Despite my own worries about reading anachronistically, I am convinced these complex interactions are in this text and in many others, and not just a result of me reading melancholically.

I hope today to convince you of this and to suggest the foundational role of trauma and loss, mourning and melancholic incorporation in the writings by and about two medieval women. I will then turn, albeit briefly, to what these women's stories can tell us about Freud, melancholia, and what we might call, for lack of better words, the theological imagination. To get at these questions, I need first to lay out a three or sometimes fourfold movement visible in the devotional, visionary, and mystical lives of Beatrice of Nazareth (1200–1268) and Margaret Ebner (ca. 1291–1351). The most striking feature of this pattern is its movement from external objects to their internalization by the devout person (the key component of melancholy for both medieval and modern theorists), and then their subsequent re-externalization in and on the body of the believer (the rendering visible of melancholic incorporation whereby the holy person becomes Christ to those around her).

■ Beatrice of Nazareth

Beatrice of Nazareth was a Cistercian nun, the author of a short vernacular treatise, *On the Seven Manners of Loving God*, and the subject of an extensive Latin life. I've written at length about the crucial differences between Beatrice's own text and the hagiography, presumably written by a male cleric shortly after her death. I will conflate the two documents here, however, for it is only when they are brought together that the three- and fourfold pattern of female sanctity in which I

am interested emerges.² Most crucially, the hagiographer tells us about Beatrice's use of external objects as an aid to devotion, just as he will emphasize the external manifestations of belief on Beatrice's body. Beatrice, on the other hand, is intent on describing her experience as *internal*, and eschews discussion of external objects of devotion and of her own, externally apprehended body. Together the two texts give a picture of movement from external to internal and back again that we then find repeated in fourteenth-century texts like Margaret Ebner's *Revelations*.³

After briefly describing the ascetic rigors to which Beatrice subjects herself, the hagiographer writes of her devotion, particularly to the cross of Christ:

Day and night she wore on her breast a wooden cross, about a palm in length, tightly tied with a knotted string. On it was written the Lord's passion, the horror of the last judgement, the severity of the judge and other things she wanted always to keep in mind. Besides this she also carried tied to her arm another image of the Lord's cross painted on a piece of parchment. She had a third, painted on a piece of wood, set before her when she was writing, so that wherever she went, or whatever exterior work she did, all forgetfulness would be banished, and by means of the image of the cross she would keep [firmly] impressed on her heart and memory whatever she feared to lose.⁴

Not only does the hagiographer portray Beatrice as making use of devotional objects to aid in her meditative practice, but there is a proliferation of these objects, suggesting both a desire that the cross be ever present to the believer, and its tendency to slip from memory in the absence of external reminders.⁵

² For the gap between the two, see Amy Hollywood, *The Soul as Virgin Wife: Mechthild of Magdeburg, Marguerite Porete, and Meister Eckhart* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995) 27–39; Amy Hollywood, "Inside Out: Beatrice of Nazareth and Her Hagiographer," in *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters* (ed. Catherine Mooney; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999) 78–98; and Amy Hollywood, *Sensible Ecstasy: Mysticism, Sexual Difference, and the Demands of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001) 247–66.

³ There is no evidence that Ebner knew Beatrice's *vita* or treatise. Rather, Beatrice's *vita* and treatise and Ebner's *Revelations* provide evidence for commonly disseminated patterns of sanctity.

⁴ *The Life of Beatrice of Nazareth* (trans. and annotated by Roger DeGanck; Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1991) 88–91. Hereafter cited parenthetically in the text as *LBN*.

⁵ Jeffrey Hamburger provides countless examples, particularly from late-medieval Germany, of the use of devotional images and objects. Central for Hamburger is the juxtaposition of devotional practices focused on objects and sensory, ecstatic, and unitive experiences of the divine. Yet his statements about the nature of this relationship focus on methodological and descriptive issues rather than explanatory ones and therefore demand amplification, both in terms of the various ways in which medieval people themselves understood the relationship between these phenomena and of how recent theoretical work on ritual, memory, and belief might help us understand medieval practices and mentalities.

Hamburger struggles with how theoretically and practically to articulate the relationship between devotional images and visions. With regard to images of the cross that give expression to the Bride's wounding love (drawing on biblical language from the Song of Songs and the tradition of Longinus), Hamburger argues: "The miniature need no more reflect a vision than Gertrude [of Helfta's] vision need rely on such a miniature. Nevertheless, the miniature's visualization of the same commonplace metaphors of mystical union is intended to stimulate and encourage the kind of experience recorded in the visions of Gertrude of Helfta." Thus while the vision might not *rely*

The wooden cross and images of the cross painted on wood and parchment ultimately, however, become unnecessary. The goal of Beatrice's meditation on Christ's cross seems to be met when she has so fully internalized the image of Christ's Passion that she is unable *not* to see it before her mind's eye:

Thereafter for about five unbroken years she had the mental image of the Lord's passion so firmly impressed in her memory that she scarcely ever quit this sweet meditation, but clung from the bottom of her heart with wonderful devotion to everything he deigned to suffer for the salvation of the human race. (*LBN*, 92–93)

The hagiographer thus depicts Beatrice as having so successfully internalized that which is represented by the cross as no longer to require external aids for her meditative practice.⁶

on such visual images, the images are meant to stimulate and encourage such visions. Hamburger does not ask, however, either how images serve to stimulate and encourage visions, or how medieval people believed this occurred. Jeffrey Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany* (New York: Zone Books, 1998) 127.

Elsewhere, Hamburger talks about the relationship between visions and visual images in terms of analogy. "The drawings from St. Walburg do not transcribe such visions, nor should the experience of viewing them be confused with visionary experience itself. The analogies are structural. They extend beyond straightforward parallels in imagery, the search for which reduces visionary accounts to no more than another set of textual sources or, conversely, the comparable works of art to little more than stimuli for hallucinations masquerading as authentic vatic phenomena. Instead, the wide-ranging correspondences authorized the images as instruments of meditation, just as, on occasion, works of art could authenticate visions. The analogies between works of art and visions enabled the images to inspire certain devotional experiences to which visualization and, on occasion, visionary experience were intrinsic." Hamburger's point is crucial methodologically. As he convincingly argues, the search for "sources" is inadequate and misguided. "No single passage or group of passages linked in exegesis serves as a univocal source [for an image]." Likewise, no image can serve as the univocal source for a vision or visionary account. "Instead, the devotional works that inform the drawings [from St. Wahlburg] stand *pars pro toto* for the spiritual readings that would have informed the nuns' response to them, just as the drawings, in turn, focused and heightened their readings of exegetical and meditational texts." See Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists: The Visual Culture of a Medieval Convent* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997) 130 and 168; see also 154, 164, 168–69, 214.

Although this paper does not directly touch on these issues, in future work I hope to explore the question of how visual images and texts, whether read or heard, and ascetic, paraliturgical, and liturgical practices, serve as tools for meditation. I hope also to consider what meditation itself is believed to accomplish and how its effects are experienced and theologically articulated. In a figure like Margaret Ebner, moreover, these practices and experiences are not merely visual, but involve all of the senses.

⁶ On the tradition of meditation on the life of Christ, its goal in the internalization of Christ's Passion, and the compunction for human sinfulness that necessitated it, see Denise Despres, *Ghostly Sights: Visual Meditation in Late-Medieval Literature* (Norman, Okla.: Pilgrim Books, 1989) 19–54; Thomas Bestul, *Texts of the Passion: Latin Devotional Literature and Medieval Society* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996) esp. 26–68; and Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400–1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) esp. 165–83.

Turning to Beatrice's own treatise, *On the Seven Manners of Loving God*, we find no explicit reference to her devotion to Christ's cross, either as externally apprehended through created objects or as internally present to the mind. Yet the language Beatrice uses to describe her intense love for God can be traced to contemporary discourses on and representations of the Passion (discourses and representations closely tied to ancient and medieval medical accounts of melancholia). In describing the violent and overwhelming experience of the fifth manner of loving, Beatrice writes that

at times love becomes so boundless and so overflowing in the soul, when it itself is so mightily and violently moved in the heart, that it seems (*dunct*) to the soul that the heart is wounded again and again, and that these wounds increase every day in bitter pain and in fresh intensity. It seems (*dunct*) to the soul that the veins are bursting, the blood spilling, the marrow withering, the bones softening, the bosom burning, the throat parching, so that her visage and her body in its every part feels this inward (*van binnen*) heat, and this is the fever of love.⁷

The wounding of the heart by love calls to mind both Song of Songs 4:9 ("You have wounded my heart, my sister, my bride, with one of thy eyes") and the piercing of Christ's side by Longinus's spear. In Sermon 61 on the Song of Songs, Bernard of Clairvaux writes that the spear, in piercing Christ's side, laid bare his heart, the very heart wounded by the glance of his beloved.⁸ Beatrice's words, then, evoke the Passion in ways that may seem oblique to modern readers but would have been clear to her contemporaries. In writing of her own heartache, moreover, she not only internalizes a mental image of the Passion, but herself comes to experience internally the suffering Christ felt on the cross (a movement of identification facilitated by the Song of Songs itself, which moves between the laments of the Bridegroom and his Bride).

The conflation of language from the Song of Songs with events from the Passion narrative is further reinforced by the application of medical accounts of lovesickness and melancholia to the Song of Songs. Twelfth-century commentators on the Song wrestle with the problem of how lovesickness, which they considered to be a physical illness, "could signify spiritual love." Yet by the thirteenth century, William of Auvergne, bishop of Paris, argues that the medical language of lovesickness can be used to help describe and understand mystical rapture.⁹ The soul

⁷ Beatrice of Nazareth, *Seven Manieren van Minne* (ed. L. Reypens and J. Van Mierlo; Leuven: S. V. de Vlaamsche Boekenhal, 1926) 19–20; Beatrice of Nazareth, "There Are Seven Manners of Loving," in *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature* (ed. Elizabeth Alvilda Petroff; trans. Eric Colledge; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) 203. Translation modified. My thanks to Walter Simons for help with this difficult passage and other suggestions for reading the Dutch text.

⁸ Bernard of Clairvaux, Sermon 61 in *On the Song of Songs III* (trans. Kilian Walsh and Irene Edmunds; Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1979) 143–44.

⁹ Mary Wack, *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages: The Viaticum and Its Commentaries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990) 23–24.

languishing for love of God (“for I am sick with love,” Song of Songs 2:5, 5:8) becomes emblematic of mystical rapture itself, and the effects of lovesickness and mystical desire are almost indistinguishable.¹⁰ Medieval natural philosophers and theologians, moreover, closely associated lovesickness with melancholia and both, it must be added, with languor.¹¹ Although in the Middle Ages, melancholia is often associated with acedia and anger¹² and, much less often, with envy and avarice¹³—all sinful states—lovesickness as a species of melancholia is clearly not, or at least not always, sinful. Instead, mania, sorrow, despair, and languor (not easily assimilable categories, to modern ears) are so closely associated with melancholic lovesickness that by the twelfth century, as Mary Wack explains, “the medical *signa amoris* came to be applied to mystical love.”¹⁴ And not only, I argue, with mystical love of the soul for God, but also the love of Christ for humanity.

When Beatrice writes that it seems to her as if her veins were bursting, her marrow withering, her bones softening, her throat parching, and above all, her blood spilling, she borrows from late-medieval medical discourses about lovesickness and melancholia.¹⁵ She describes herself as sick with love, not for another human being, but for God. By juxtaposing this language with that of the heart wound, moreover, she conflates the soul’s love for God with God’s love for the soul as demonstrated by the Son’s death on the cross. For medieval medical writers within both the Christian and Muslim traditions, lovesickness as a form of melancholia (or sometimes as a forerunner to melancholia) is a malfunctioning of judgment or the estimative faculty. Like Freud, as we will see, Avicenna and those who follow him argue that the melancholic (whether lovesick or not) overestimates his or her object.¹⁶ Although often read within the terms of humoral theory (a complicating factor I don’t have time to discuss today), Avicenna and his followers fundamentally

¹⁰ As Bernard McGinn shows, James of Vitry’s *Life of Marie of Oignies* (ca. 1213) is the first text to use language traditionally associated with the heights of monastic contemplation (*separatus a corpore, a sensibilibus abstracta, in excesssu rapta*) for trance-like states of langour, furthering the association of lovesickness (langour) with mystical ecstasy. See Bernard McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism, 1200–1350* (New York: Crossroad, (1998) 37–38.

¹¹ See Wack, *Lovesickness*, 6, 10, 12–13, 21, 35, 40, 56, 61, 160–62.

¹² For the association between melancholia and acedia (often translated as sloth, although the term as it first appears in Cassian [d. 430] and as it is used throughout the medieval period carries much more complex connotations), see in particular Morton W. Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins: An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept, with Special Reference to Medieval English Literature* (Michigan State College Press, 1952) 430, n. 61; Stanley Jackson, *Melancholia and Depression* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986) 66–70; Juliana Schiesari, *The Gendering of Melancholia: Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Gendering of Loss in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press) 154–58; and Jennifer Radden, ed., *The Nature of Melancholy: From Aristotle to Kristeva* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 19–20, 69–74.

¹³ See Bloomfield, *Seven Deadly Sins*, 428 n. 30; and Wack, *Lovesickness*, 12–13, 162.

¹⁴ Wack, *Lovesickness*, 23.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 56–59.

agree with Freud that lovesickness and melancholy involve an over-valuation of the object, suffering in the face of one's own inadequacy before the beloved, and the beloved's loss or absence. We can discern here why melancholic lovesickness for God or Christ cannot be sinful, for the object of love cannot be over-valued, nor the lover ever sufficiently debased before its divine beloved.¹⁷

The tie between Beatrice's internal experience of a lovesickness reminiscent of Christ's Passion and her meditation on the Passion of Christ becomes clearer when we see how Beatrice's hagiographer chose to translate the passage of the treatise cited above. As elsewhere in his rendering of Beatrice's words, the hagiographer externalizes what she describes as internally apprehended experiences:

Indeed her heart, deprived of strength by this invasion, often gave off a sound like that of a shattering vessel, while she both felt the same and heard it exteriorly. Also the blood diffused through her bodily members boiled over through her open veins. Her bones contracted and the marrow disappeared; the dryness of her chest produced hoarseness of throat. And to make a long story short, the very fervor of her holy longing and love blazed up as a fire in all her bodily members, making her perceptibly (*sensibiliter*) hot in a wondrous way. (*LBN*, 308–11)

Lest this body, with blood boiling over through its open veins, seem far from the representations of Christ's Passion on which Beatrice might have meditated, we have only to turn to an image now in Cologne, and probably produced in the Rhineland during the fourteenth century.¹⁸ Here we see Christ depicted as awash in blood, suggesting a visual rendition of the reading of Christ's Passion as lovesickness evoked textually by Beatrice's hagiographer. We cannot know if she ever saw images like this one. Nonetheless, it is clear that a common set of biblical and medical references enables the conflation of Christ's Passion with the love of the Bridegroom for his Bride in the Song of Songs and with medieval discourses on lovesickness. Christ's Passion *is*—iconically and experientially—melancholic lovesickness. In taking on that lovesickness, internalizing and then externally enacting Christ's melancholic desire, Beatrice herself shares in and is depicted as reenacting Christ's Passion.

As I have said, the emphasis on external objects of devotion as aides to meditation and the subsequent externalization of the internalized image of Christ's suffering on the body of the saint appear only in Beatrice's hagiography, not in her own texts. She quite explicitly emphasizes the internal nature of her experience, perhaps in an attempt to forestall thirteenth-century presumptions of the necessarily bodily nature of women's sanctity. By the time Margaret Ebner writes her *Revelations* in the fourteenth century, however, women religious writers seem fully to have inter-

¹⁷ On Theresa and the attempt to distinguish loving desire for God from melancholia, and the reasons for this shift away from medieval Christian patterns of thought, see Radden, *Nature of Melancholy*, 107–17.

¹⁸ See Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists*, Plate One.

nalized the prescriptions for sanctity found in thirteenth-century hagiographies. For this reason, Kate Greenspan and Richard Kieckhefer have referred to books like the *Revelations* as autohagiographies, for they include accounts of both the internally apprehended and externally visible lives of the holy person.¹⁹ Something very close to the threefold pattern of internalization and externalization discerned in Beatrice's treatise and hagiography, then, appears explicitly in Ebner's *Revelations*.²⁰

■ Margaret Ebner

Ebner writes about her devotional practices and their seemingly miraculous fulfillment in ways that demonstrate the relationship of these practices to her intractable mourning over the loss of a beloved other. The close ties between lovesickness and melancholia, loss and mourning, are thus starkly apparent within her book (as also are the deep resonances between late-medieval devotional and mystical texts and psychoanalysis). Like Beatrice, moreover, Ebner not only comes to see and hear Christ's suffering, but also to experience it herself. Again, in ways that Freud will later theorize in psychoanalytic terms, the infinitely valued but absent beloved is both idealized and internalized by the lovesick melancholic.²¹

Ebner lived from 1291–1351, spending most of her life in the Dominican monastery of Maria Medingen near Dillingen in southern Germany.²² Her life was marked, according to the account she gives us in her *Revelations*, by continuous ill health and what we would now call paramystical phenomena. The illnesses begin in 1312, but the real impetus for her special religious experiences seems to have been the death of the nun who cared for her in her illness over a number of years and, a year later, her meeting with the secular clergyman, Henry of Nördlingen. (Henry would become her lifelong friend and supporter, making her the center of a

¹⁹ See Richard Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls: Fourteenth-Century Saints and Their Religious Milieu* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984) 6. How we are to read these accounts, of course, remains open to question.

²⁰ A similar pattern can also be seen in Henry Suso's *Life of the Servant*, although with important differences arguably tied to gender difference. (Hence Suso insists that only he can enact the physical appropriation of Christ's Passion; the women around him instead make small emblems that, when they have touched his [Suso's] wounded body, become objects of veneration and community formation.)

²¹ Freud uses the terms "internalization" and "incorporation" interchangeably. See Jean Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis* (trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith; New York: Norton, 1973) 211–12, 226–27. Although Karl Abraham and Maria Torok argue for the necessity of distinguishing the two, I will stay with Freud's usage here.

²² For Margaret Ebner, see Philip Strauch, ed., *Margaretha Ebner und Heinrich von Nördlingen: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Deutschen Mystik [ME]* (Freiburg: Mohr, 1882), which contains Margaret's *Revelations* (1–166); and Ebner, *Major Works [MW]* (trans. and ed. Leonard P. Hindley; New York: Paulist Press, 1993), containing a translation of the *Revelations* (83–172) and a prayer attributed to Margaret, the *Pater Noster* (173–78). The latter volume also includes a useful introduction and bibliography. Further references will be found parenthetically as ME and MW, respectively, within the text (MW is listed first in each such reference).

loose knit group of like-minded religious people, "The Friends of God.") Up until this time in her life, Ebner describes only two experiences that might be taken as extraordinary signs of religious grace, a dream and an audition.²³

The relative aridity of Ebner's spiritual life changes drastically, however, with the death of the caretaking nun, whom Ebner never names. Ebner's mourning is intense: "there were times when I thought I could not be without my sister and could not live without her" (*MW*, 92; *ME*, 13). Although she claims that this sorrow often turned to joy, she admits that she "could not actually be conscious of" this joy. The sister returns to Ebner in sleep, letting her know that she is in heaven with the Virgin Mary, the humanity of the Lord, and the divine Trinity. She promises, furthermore, that she will be there to greet Ebner when Ebner dies. Yet despite these comforting dreams, Ebner's sorrow for her sister "was not relieved" (*MW*, 92; *ME*, 15). Out of this grief, however, emerges the full range of sensory experiences of both comfort and suffering that will mark the remainder of Ebner's life. Thus in the year following the nun's death, in the midst of an administrative conflict in the monastery about which Ebner claims not to care, she went out to visit the convent graves (and presumably that of her beloved fellow sister). Later, she writes:

As I went into choir a sweet fragrance surrounded me and penetrated through my heart and into all my limbs and the name *Jesus Christus* was given to me so powerfully that I could pay attention to nothing else. And it seemed to me that I was really in His presence. (*MW*, 93; *ME*, 15)

This marks the beginning of Ebner's multi-sensory experience of the divine presence, which will come to encapsulate not only smell, but also hearing, sight, taste, touch, and proprioception. It is also the first instance of one of the two devotional practices that will be central to her life from that time forward, the constant repetition of the name of Jesus Christ.²⁴

Ebner insists that in her subsequent meeting with Henry of Nördlingen (1332), he spoke words of such comfort that the death of her sister was "never again as unbearable as it had been" (*MW*, 93; *ME*, 16). Yet immediately following this passage she describes the onset of "the greatest pain" in her head and teeth, a pain so great that she "could not bow [her] head for six weeks and all seemed bitter to [her] and [she] thought that [she] would rather suffer death each day" (*MW*, 93;

²³ The first is a dream in which she feels full of grace and lightness and experiences God sporting with her soul. The second is a moment in which a voice suggests the divine origin and power of her daily suffering. As Ebner explains, pain replaces active asceticism in her life, for her illness often makes her unable to participate in even the normal ascetic activities associated with her monastic rule. Suffering, however, is an everyday occurrence. So at one moment, when her sisters believe she is at the point of death, a voice tells her, "You are not dying; indeed many of the nuns will die before you." The voice continues, "You must suffer here on earth. . . . But when you die, you will go to heaven without delay" (*MW*, 90; *ME*, 10).

²⁴ This practice is related, in complex ways, to the developing devotion to the name of Jesus Christ in the West and the hesychast movement, centered on recitation of the Jesus prayer, in Eastern Orthodox Christianity.

ME, 16). The very intensity of this suffering, however, becomes the basis for the second great devotional practice of Ebner's life, her meditation on the person of Christ, and in particular, on his Passion (joined later by a parallel devotion to his childhood):

Once during Lent [apparently in 1334] great desire and powerful grace were given to me to serve God more perfectly. I felt how our Lord's works of love increased powerfully in me. And I desired that my whole body would be full of the signs of love of the holy cross, as many as were possible to be on me, and that each one would be given to me with all its suffering and pain over my entire body. Still I desired that there be no member of my body not wounded with the pains of my Lord Jesus Christ. I also had great yearning to hear something about the signs of love and works of love (*minnenzaichen und werken*) because I felt an inner grace-filled attraction toward them. Eight days before Easter the Lord gave me a most severe and unceasing pain. In this agony I heard about the sufferings of our Lord as the four Passion narratives were being read. (MW, 95; ME, 19–20)

Ebner's desire for the stigmata ("the signs of love of the holy cross")²⁵ entails not only a desire for visible signs of Christ's suffering on her body, but also for the pain of that suffering. Her prayer is answered when she physically reenacts Christ's pain during Passion week (a pattern that will be repeated in subsequent years in a cycle that follows the liturgical calendar).

Ebner's devotion to Christ's cross not only brings about her own bodily suffering, but also leads to her extraordinary responses to auditory and visual representations of Christ's Passion. The passage cited above suggests the importance of the auditory, for Ebner first desires to hear the story of Christ's Passion, and then miraculously does hear the story read aloud.²⁶ She goes on to stress the role of the visual and the tactile in her devotion:

Every cross I came upon I kissed ardently and as frequently as possible. I pressed it forcibly against my heart constantly, so that I often thought I could not separate myself from it and remain alive. (MW, 96; ME, 20)

This language, so strongly reminiscent of that used to discuss the dead nun who had cared for Ebner, suggests that, for Ebner, the cross and Christ on it have replaced this beloved sister in her affective life. Ebner continues:

Such great desire and such sweet power so penetrated my heart and all of my members that I could not withdraw myself from the cross. Wherever I went I had a cross with me. In addition, I possessed a little book in which there

²⁵ For other examples of Ebner's desire for the stigmata, in which she explicitly invokes the famous example of Francis of Assisi, see MW, 110, 127; ME, 46, 78. For the fulfillment of this desire, in which Ebner "was given the sight of the five holy wounds" on her own body, see MW, 112; ME, 50. This occurs in 1339. For a more ambiguous fulfillment, in which the pain of the body wracked on the cross is invoked, see MW, 157; ME, 132–33.

²⁶ As is often the case in Ebner's *Revelations*, there is a natural explanation for what occurs, although Ebner also reads the event as a sign of divine grace.

was a picture of the Lord on the cross I shoved it secretly against my bosom, open to that place, and wherever I went I pressed it to my heart with great joy and with measureless grace. When I wanted to sleep, I took the picture of the Crucified Lord in the little book and laid it under my face. Also, around my neck I wore a cross that hung down to my heart. In addition, I took a large cross whenever possible and laid it over my heart. I clung to it while lying down until I fell asleep in great grace. We had a large crucifix in choir. I had the greatest desire to kiss it and to press it close to my heart like the others. But it was too high up for me and was too large in size.²⁷ (*MW*, 96; *ME*, 20–21)

The one sister in whom Ebner confides this desire refuses to help her, fearing that the act would be too much for one as physically frail as Ebner. Yet, Ebner claims, what is not possible while awake God grants her in a dream: “It seemed as if I were standing before the cross filled with the desire that I usually had within me. As I stood before the image, my Lord Jesus Christ bent down from the cross and let me kiss His open heart and gave me to drink of the blood flowing from His heart” (*MW*, 96; *ME*, 21).²⁸

The goal of Ebner’s devotion to the name of Jesus Christ and to his Passion is suggested in these passages and very shortly attained. The following Lent (1335), as Ebner explains:

The sweetest Name of Jesus Christ was given to me with such great love that by the interior divine power of God I could pray only with continuous speaking. I could not resist it. I do not know how to write about it except to say that the Name *Jesus Christus* was constantly on my lips. The speaking lasted until prime and I could do nothing else. Then I was silent. I could avoid speaking with other people, but I had no power to cease from this speaking.²⁹ (*MW*, 100; *ME*, 27)

Ebner has so fully internalized her devotional practice that she is now unable *not* to repeat continuously the name of Jesus Christ.

A similar pattern repeats itself on the auditory, visual, and tactile planes, although the process of meditative internalization is slower and involves three stages rather

²⁷ Again there are clear parallels here with Francis, who desires to have Christ’s cross impressed on his heart.

²⁸ For the kiss of the heart and drinking blood from Christ’s side wound, see Amy Hollywood, “‘That Glorious Slit’: Irigaray and the Medieval Devotion to Christ’s Side Wound,” in *Luce Irigaray and Premodern Culture: Thresholds of History* (ed. Elizabeth D. Harvey and Theresa Krier; New York: Routledge, 2005) 105–25, and the literature cited there.

²⁹ Hindsley makes the choice to capitalize three words Ebner often uses to describe her experience, thereby hypostasizing them as special states: the Silence, the Speaking, and the Outcry. Although Ebner does use the words *swige*, *rede*, and *rüefe* to name certain experiences in which divine agency renders her completely passive, the line between actively keeping silence or speaking the name of Jesus Christ and being unable *not* to do these things is often less clear than Hindsley’s translations allow. For this reason, I find Hindsley’s capitalizations misleading and so omit them here. I don’t discuss silence in this paper; suffice to say that it is a state in which Ebner is literally unable to speak, her jaw often clenched together so that nothing can pass through her lips.

than two. (I am simplifying the often complex relationship between these stages for the sake of time.) First, Ebner desires to impress the cross and the Passion story onto her heart by voluntarily embracing visual images and repeatedly listening to or reading the Passion narrative. This is followed by an inability not to see Christ's suffering. In the Lent of 1340, while at matins, for example, "the greatest pain came over" Ebner's heart (like "the greatest pain" that comes over Ebner after she apparently accepted her fellow nun's death),

and also a sorrow, so bitter that it was as if I were really in the presence of my Beloved, my most heartily Beloved One, and as if I had seen his suffering with my own eyes and as if it were all happening before me at this very moment. (*MW*, 114; *ME*, 52)

Following in the meditative tradition on Christ's life and death promulgated by the Cistercians, Franciscans and Dominicans, Ebner here describes a perfect *meditatio* in which she no longer needs external aides, be they visual, tactile, or auditory, in order for Christ's Passion to be viscerally present to her.

With this internalizing movement, Christ's Passion is also re-externalized in and on Ebner's body. Laid out in pain in the choir and then the dormitory, Ebner becomes a visible sign of the suffering engendered by witnessing Christ's Passion and, ultimately as we will see, of the Passion itself. Not only does she find herself unable *not* to repeat the name of Christ (the speaking), and not to hear of or see Christ's torment before her mind's ear and eye, but she also finds herself unable to hear about or see Christ's death without crying aloud (the outcry).³⁰ She claims that other signs of the body's share in Christ's Passion often accompany this externalizing vocalization:

But when I was given to loud exclamations and outcries by the gentle goodness of God (these were given to me when I heard the holy suffering spoken about), then I was pierced to the heart and this extended to all my members, and then I was bound and ever more grasped by the silence. In these cases, I sit a long time—sometimes longer, sometimes shorter. After this my heart was as if shot by a mysterious force. Its effect rose up to my head and passed on to all my members and broke them violently. Compelled by the same force I cried out loudly and exclaimed. I had no power over myself and was not able to stop the outcry until God released me from it. Sometimes it grasped me so powerfully that red blood spurted from me. (*MW*, 114; *ME*, 54)

Ebner's identification with the Passion shifts from identification with the onlookers to one with Christ himself. With blood gushing forth from her body, moreover,

³⁰ The complicating factor here is that the outcry first emerges around visual or oral representations of Christ's Passion and then *intensifies* when Ebner finds herself unable not to see and hear of the Passion. In the latter instances, moreover, the outcry has new bodily components.

Ebner so fully incorporates Christ—the lost beloved other—that she now visibly represents his suffering for those around her.³¹

In a similar way, increasingly Ebner does not have to see representations of or hear about Christ's Passion to be overcome by what she calls the outcry. Rather, an "inner vision" comes upon her, and she is unable to restrain herself from crying out in pain and suffering. Again, these events occur particularly during Lent and with greatest intensity during Holy Week:

And that happened to me frequently at the same time because of some inner vision especially during Lent, even when I did not hear or read the Passion. On that Wednesday when I had read vespers, the entire Passion came to me again with strong outcries and exclamations. On Thursday after that at matins I was again grasped by great sincere sympathy inwardly and outwardly. Then on Friday the Passion was so really present to me while reading the office that I cried out when I read one of the hours. (*MW*, 115; *ME*, 55–56)

Throughout the week, Ebner was in bed, "so wounded externally from the interior suffering" that she couldn't bear to have anyone touch her. Yet she shares not only in Christ's Passion, but also in his resurrection. On Easter Sunday the nun who cared for her found her "in great joy and in good health" (*MW*, 115; *ME*, 56).³²

³¹ Or, at least, this is how Ebner depicts herself. How historians should read Ebner's hagiographical literalizing of metaphors found in earlier women's writing (like that of Beatrice) requires much further discussion. On the salvific power of Christ's blood and the centrality of blood in representations of the Passion, see Hollywood, "'That Glorious Slit'"; and Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

³² This pattern, of Lenten suffering and post-Easter renewal will increasingly be joined with a devotion to the Christ child. Focused around Advent and Christmas, the practices involved in this devotion are not unlike those tied to Ebner's devotion to the Passion, with an emphasis on both auditory and visual meditational practice and the use of devotional objects. See, for example, *MW*, 132–34; *ME*, 87–91. Henry of Nördlingen champions devotion to the Christ child in a letter to Ebner, suggesting that he may have been the source of this devotion (which also appears in Mechthild of Magdeburg's *Flowing light of the Godhead*, sent to Margaret by Henry). Leonard Hindsley insists that Ebner partook in this devotion independently of Henry's influence, since the first letter in which he discusses it was sent at Christmas 1341, three years before she began to write down the *Revelations*. Yet Ebner's account of the years 1332–1340 deal solely with devotion to Christ's Passion and therefore seem to reflect her actual *practice* before the Christ child comes to the forefront in about 1344. She seems both to accept Henry's admonition that she add devotion to the Christ child to her religious life, and at the same time accurately records the absence of that devotion before 1341. See Hindsley, "Introduction," in *MW*, 53–54; and "Letter 38" in Strauch, *ME*, 233–34.

What seems further worthy of note is that Ebner clearly marks a tension between the two even as, in the later parts of her *Revelations*, she pursues both. When Ebner first asks the Virgin Mary to allow her to experience the joys of the Christ child together with the Passion, Mary herself remarks on the apparent disparity between these two desires:

One day I wanted our Lady to help me so that the five signs of love would be impressed upon me with the same feeling as they had been impressed upon St. Francis. On that same day I asked her to help me to perceive what divine joy there would be with her dear Child. Then I was answered lovingly by her, "You ask me for such dissimilar things that I do not know what I should do for you." (*MW*, 127; *ME*, 78)

This pattern, of Lenten suffering followed by Easter renewal, which follows the liturgical calendar that structured a Dominican nun's daily life and year, will continue throughout Ebner's *Revelations*. Christ's name and the wounds of his Passion are further impressed on her heart and the "rending arrows" of the Lord shoot through her heart "with a swift shot from his spear of Love" (MW, 156; ME, 131; here, as in Beatrice's *Seven Manners of Loving*, language from the Song of Songs comes together with reflections on Longinus's spear). Perhaps Ebner's most complete moment of identification with Christ's suffering occurs through her own highly particular version of the stigmata. She receives not the visible wounds, nor simply the pain of the hands, feet, side wound, and head wounds (caused by the crown of thorns), but a wracking of the entire body reminiscent of late medieval and early modern representations of the crucifixion:³³

I felt an inner pain in my hands as if they were stretched out, torn, and broken through, and I supposed that they would always be useless to me thereafter. In my head I felt a wondrous pain as if I were pierced and broken through.³⁴ That seemed so excruciating to me that I began to tremble and shook so violently that the sisters had to hold me fast. I trembled while in their grasp and I felt this trembling for a long time after Easter whenever I prayed earnestly or read or talked, and I perceived the same painful brokenness in all my members, especially on both sides and on my back, arms, and legs, so that it seemed to me I was in the last throes and that all this suffering would continue until death, if it were the will of God. (MW, 157; ME, 132–33)

Ebner ends her book with an attempt to resolve this dilemma, not through reason or theological argument, but through a visionary dream in which she gives symbolic form to her experience. In the dream, she sees two sisters from her monastery. They give her two apples that have fallen from the beautiful trees among which they are wandering:

One of them was sour, the other sweet. They asked me to eat them. I took the apples and bit into them. Then I felt such great grace from the apples that I said, "No one on earth could eat both." They said, "If you do not like them, give them back to us." Then I awoke still chewing, and the grace was so sweet and so strong that I could not speak a word and could not take in breath and was really without my bodily senses. That lasted a long time with me and after that I read matins without comprehending a word. (MW, 171; ME, 159)

Always within the context of the monastic rule by which her life was strictly ordered, Ebner pursues devotions to the name of Christ, to his childhood, and to his Passion. No matter how deeply at odds these various devotions may be emotionally and affectively, they come together in her belief in Christ's humanity and its salvific work. One link between the childhood of Christ and his Passion lies in Ebner's Eucharistic devotion; another link between these two moments in Christ's life, as between Ebner's devotion to Christ's Passion, his Infancy, and the Holy Name, is the feast of the Circumcision. See Irénée Noye, "Jésus (Nom de)," *Dictionnaire Spiritualité* [DS] 8, cols. 1109–126.

³³ See James Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: A Study in the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative* (Kortrijk, Belgium: Van Ghemmert, 1979).

³⁴ This recalls the experience of those stigmatics who either exhibit visibly or feel the pain of the wounds on Christ's head made by the crown of thorns. For a brief discussion of the variety of phenomena associated with the stigmata, attempts to catalogue and classify them, and a perceptive account of the classical and modern literature, see Pierre Adnès, "Stigmaté," *DS*, 14, cols. 1211–243.

Even Easter no longer brings about Ebner's renewal. At this point, she writes, she longs for death, quoting Philippians 1:23 and 1:21: "*cupio dissolvi*" ("I desire to be destroyed")³⁵ and "*mihi vivere Christus et mori lucrum*" ("for me to live is Christ and to die is gain.") (MW, 157; ME, 132–33)

A pattern common to a number of texts from the later Middle Ages, then, appears with stark clarity in Ebner's *Revelations*. She moves through four stages: 1) She actively remembers Christ's Passion, aided by the recitation and reading of scriptural texts, meditative guides, prayers, and the divine name, as well as by devotional images and artifacts; 2) She is then unable not to cry out in the face of this suffering; 3) She *involuntarily* remembers these events, and, finally, 4) She fully internalizes and reenacts them in and on her body.

■ Trauma, Memory, and Melancholia

I have argued elsewhere that the meditative practices of the later Middle Ages, which aimed to make vivid and inescapable the pain and suffering of Christ's life and death, are curiously similar to contemporary discussions of traumatic memory.³⁶ Researchers on trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder isolate particular forms of intensely sensory and bodily memories in which the survivor involuntarily and repetitiously relives traumatic events. Such memories are intrusive, intensely vivid, repetitive, and lack a narrative frame. They are not only visual, moreover, but also often involve other senses, presumably those heightened at the moment of trauma (for Ebner the sensory associations are often biblically based).

Contemporary research suggests that in situations of hyperarousal for which one is unprepared, memory is encoded in a different, more viscerally experiential manner than normal. (The scholarship is highly contentious.)³⁷ These memories are not

³⁵ A text also cited by Beatrice of Nazareth at a crucial moment in *The Seven Manners of Loving*.

³⁶ There are, of course, enormous dangers in making a potentially anachronistic retroactive diagnosis. Ebner's *Revelations* have already been put "on the couch" by Oskar Pfister, who argued in 1911 that Ebner was an hysteric. I hope to explore the differences between my move and Pfister's in a future paper. This will include dealing with the general objections to psychoanalytic readings of medieval texts and the problematization of the category of trauma. See Oskar Pfister, "Hysterie und Mystik bei Margaretha Ebner (1291–1351)," *Zentralblatt für Psychoanalyse* 1 (1911) 468–85. For objections to Pfister, see Martin Grabmann, "Deutsche Mystik im Kloster Engelthal," *Sammelblatt des Historischen Vereins Eichstätt* 25/26 (1910–11) 33–34; Wolfgang Beutin, "'Hysterie und Mystik': Zur Mittelalter-Rezeption der frühen Psychoanalyse. Die 'Offenbarungen' der Nonne Margaretha Ebner (ca. 1291–1351), gedeutet durch den Zürcher Pfarrer und Analytiker Oskar Pfister," in *Mittelalter-Rezeption IV: Medien, Politik, Ideologie, Ökonomie* (ed. Irene von Burg et al; Göttingen: Kümmerle, 1991) 11–26; and Gertrud Jaron Lewis, *By Women, for Women, about Women: The Sister-Books of Fourteenth-Century Germany* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1996) 70–71. For a recent attack on psychoanalytic criticism from a medievalist's perspective, see Lee Patterson, "Chaucer's Pardoner on the Couch: Psyche and Clio in Medieval Literary Studies," *Speculum* 76 (2001) 638–80.

³⁷ See especially Ruth Leys, *Trauma: A Genealogy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000) and Robert McNally, *Remembering Trauma* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

assimilated to consciousness, and so impinge on it in uncontrollable and intrusive ways. Modern therapeutic accounts of bodily memory, intent on eradicating, controlling, or weakening its sensory strength, argue that this can be done through the process of narrativization. Complex therapies of speaking and reenacting traumatic events within controlled environments make it possible, so the argument goes, for bodily memories to be relived and reordered in meaningful narrative forms. The therapeutic claim is that such narrativization loosens the hold of bodily memories and alleviates suffering.³⁸

Late-medieval meditational practices like Ebner's, however, work in precisely the opposite direction. They attempt to inculcate traumatic or bodily memory—or something very like it—by rendering involuntary, vivid, and inescapable the central catastrophic event of Christian history so that the individual believer might relive and share in that trauma.³⁹ For medieval practitioners of meditation on Christ's Passion, the desire to inculcate something like traumatic memory is theologically justified by a promise: through sharing in the suffering of those who witnessed Christ's death or—as in Beatrice's *Seven Manners of Loving God* and Ebner's *Revelations*—sharing Christ's own pain, one can participate in the salvific work of the cross. The biggest difference between late medieval practice and contemporary accounts of post-traumatic stress disorder, then, is that whereas the latter lacks a narrative frame, medieval practice always occurs—at least in theory—within the context of Christian salvation history. One might argue that through meditation on the life and death of Christ, the believer destroys all other narrative frameworks for his or her life, and induces strong emotion that can then be redeployed toward the imaginative constitution of a new Christian narrative of suffering and redemption.⁴⁰ (Franciscan treatises emphasize guilt, although this is not theologically or affectively central in either Beatrice or Ebner.)

Ebner's text, in which her devotion to the Passion occurs in the midst of intense physical suffering and the loss of loved ones (not only the first nun who cared for her, but also the death of her next caretaker and that of another beloved fellow

³⁸ For the most often cited version of this argument, see Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).

³⁹ See Hollywood, *Sensible Ecstasy*, 74–97 and the literature cited there.

⁴⁰ Meditative practice itself imaginatively recreates this narrative, one given further weight and vividness by the emotions evoked through that very practice. Yet the evocation of emotion seems to depend at least in part on an increased focus on isolated aspects of Christ's Passion—fragmented moments and bits of Christ's body and the instruments of his suffering—thereby working against the apparently seamless progressivist Christian narrative. (See, for example, the innumerable late-medieval images of the instruments of Christ's suffering and death, the *arma Christi*.) This tension in the meditative tradition requires further exploration. Moreover, Ebner's constant repetition of the narrative and experience of Christ's Passion raises the question of how adequate a therapy narrativization really is. Does one simply move from repeating visceral memories to endlessly repeating the story in which those memories are supposedly rendered meaningful? Although this might alleviate suffering to an extent, it does so through displacement or sublimation, a displacement that the viscosity of Ebner's desire refuses.

nun) suggests further possible refinements in our understanding of the relationship between memory, meditation, and trauma within medieval mystical texts.⁴¹ The central traumas of Ebner's *Revelations* appear to be physical suffering and, most crucially, mourning. Throughout Ebner's *Revelations* one finds constantly repeated scenes of intense physical suffering and loss. Early in the text, however, she makes these scenes theologically meaningful by assimilating her own mourning and pain to that of Christ's followers and of Christ himself on the cross. Traumatic repetition is here not simply an involuntary repetition of past losses, but marks the willed taking on of suffering which also renders it meaningful.

Some attention to Freud's conceptions of mourning and melancholy further advances this reading. Freud opens his seminal essay "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917) by making a sharp distinction between the two reactions to loss (whether of a human being or some more abstract entity). Whereas in mourning, the bereaved is able "bit by bit" to detach herself from the beloved object, allowing other objects to replace that which is lost, in melancholia the bereaved refuses to detach from and replace the lost other.⁴² What is putatively surprising to Freud is not that melancholia occurs, but that mourning is so difficult:

Each single one of the memories and expectations in which the libido is bound to the object is brought up and hypercathected, and detachment of the libido is accomplished in respect to it. Why this compromise by which the command of reality [the loss of the object] is carried out piecemeal should be so extraordinarily painful is not at all easy to explain in terms of economics. It is remarkable that this painful unpleasure is taken as a matter of course by us. The fact is, however, that when the work of mourning is completed the ego becomes free and uninhibited again.⁴³

Despite the seemingly inexplicable detour, then, ultimately the ego returns to the pleasure-seeking state in which it is "free and uninhibited," ready to attach itself to and find pleasure with new objects.

The apparent—and unanswered—puzzle in "Mourning and Melancholia" is why the normally pleasure-optimizing ego is unable immediately to relinquish its object. Yet Freud occupies himself in most of the essay with the opposite issue: why is the ego sometimes unable to mourn at all and instead becomes melancholic? Melancholia is marked, for Freud, by dejection, unremitting sadness, listlessness, and guilt, characteristics familiar from medieval accounts of melancholia and melancholic lovesickness. I won't here rehearse the various arguments Freud makes in his attempt fully to distinguish mourning and melancholia. What is crucial for

⁴¹ There seems to be at least some supporting evidence in many of the fourteenth-century German convent chronicles, which focus on both group and individual responses to death. For full information about and discussion of these sources, see Lewis, *By Women for Women*.

⁴² Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* [SE] (ed. and trans. James Strachey; London: The Hogarth Press, 1953–74) 14:244–49.

⁴³ SE, 14:245.

my purposes today is Freud's contention that the melancholic, refusing fully to give up her object and engage in substitutions, instead identifies with the object and internalizes it.

Freud describes this double movement in a peculiar way, first claiming that the melancholic's "object-cathexis proved to have little power of resistance and was brought to an end." He goes on, however, to explain that in the case of melancholia, "the free libido was not displaced onto another object," but instead "was withdrawn into the ego. There, however, it was not employed in any unspecified way, but served to establish an *identification* of the ego with the abandoned object."⁴⁴ In other words, Freud claims both that the melancholic readily gives up her object, and that the libido released by that loss turns to the ego in the form of an incorporation of the lost object. The melancholic, despite Freud's contrary claim, never gives up but merely internalizes the lost object. As Freud goes on to explain, this incorporation both extends the ego's narcissism and is the site of a "painful wound":

Thus the shadow of the object fell upon the ego, and the latter could henceforth be judged by a special agency, as though it were an object, the forsaken object. In this way an object-loss was transformed into an ego-loss and the conflict between the ego and the loved person into a cleavage between the critical activity of the ego and the ego as altered by identification.⁴⁵

The ambivalence felt toward an object that has seemingly deserted the ego—the simultaneous hatred and love of the lost object—is now fully internalized.

In "Mourning and Melancholia" Freud argues that melancholia is a pathological state, one to which normal mourning is the healthy counterpart. We can already see, however, that the incorporations crucial to melancholia are also foundational to the constitution of the ego and to what Freud suggests is a split between the "critical activity of the ego" and its originary repressive and narcissistic aspects. Freud argues much more explicitly for this bifurcation within the ego in "The Ego and the Id" (1923). There he argues that melancholic identifications and incorporations, which he had first viewed as primarily if not solely pathological, are crucial to the development of the superego:

We succeeded in explaining the painful disorder of melancholia by supposing that [in those suffering from it] an object that was lost has been set up again inside the ego—that is, that an object-cathexis has been replaced by an identification. At the same time, however, we did not appreciate the full significance of this process and did not know how common and how typical it is. Since then we have come to understand that this kind of substitution has a share in determining the form taken by the ego and that it makes an essential contribution towards building up what is called its "character."⁴⁶

⁴⁴ *SE*, 14:249.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Sigmund Freud, "The Ego and the Id," *SE*, 19:28.

For Freud, then, the very constitution of the subject as self-reflective and self-critical depends on melancholic incorporation. This takes a particularly Oedipal caste, for ultimately it is the father who is thus internalized—and most completely, according to Freud, by men. Yet Freud's account of melancholic idealization and incorporation in no way leads inevitably to his later claims, particularly in his essays concerning femininity, that the Oedipal narrative alone governs the development of "character." (Nor does the deployment of the Oedipal narrative itself demand that the internalized object be the father. For both boys and girls, it is the *mother* who is lost. Freud has to do a lot of work, much of it unconvincing, to make the father the object of melancholic identification and incorporation.)⁴⁷

Freud argues for the pathological nature of melancholia because the melancholic's sadness, guilt, and ambivalence are so often experienced as debilitating, even suicidal. Ebner, arguably a chronic melancholic who mourns the deaths of those around her and the culturally valorized death of Christ, ends where she begins—wishing to die. Yet the theological and existential implications of that desire differ radically. No longer a lone, ill woman mourning the loss of her fellow sister and caretaker, by the end of the *Revelations* Ebner is a woman thoroughly identified with Christ's salvific suffering. She has become the center of the spiritual life of her convent and of a religious movement ("The Friends of God") that sees in her the fulfillment of Christ's promises to his followers. Traumatic repetition here joins with melancholic incorporation, demonstrating the way in which incorporation can itself be a form of repetition. Beatrice and Ebner both necessarily close their texts in the midst of their lives, with no end in sight to the cycle of suffering. Yet the hope offered by the Christian narrative is that with death, the peace and joy experienced only intermittently on earth, will supercede the traumatic repetitions, melancholic identifications and incorporations brought about by illness and loss.⁴⁸

■ Loss, Identification, and Incorporation

The logic of identification and incorporation, then, is remarkably similar in Beatrice, Ebner, and Freud. The crucial difference, of course, is that by the time of "The Ego and the Id," Freud describes this process as fundamental to the articulation of

⁴⁷ See especially Sigmund Freud, "Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes," *SE*, 19:243–58; Sigmund Freud, "Female Sexuality," *SE*, 21:223–43; and Sigmund Freud, "Femininity," in *SE*, 22:112–35. On the complex relationship between Freud's accounts of sexual difference and religion, see Judith Van Herik, *Freud on Femininity and Faith* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

⁴⁸ One is tempted, of course, to add "and by sin," assuming that to be the theological category through which Ebner understands the necessity of the Passion; and yet sin, oddly, plays a very small role in her *Revelations*. Here, finally, is another topic that will require further exploration and explanation before the full import of mourning and trauma for understanding late-medieval devotional practice can be assessed. For Ebner, at least, mourning and the traumatic repetition of suffering and loss seem to supercede sin—and at times, even the hopes of redemption on which that repetition is theologically premised.

the psyche and repeatedly emphasizes throughout the 1920s and 1930s that it is the father who is the first and primary object of identification and incorporation. Beatrice, Beatrice's hagiographer, and Ebner, on the other hand, describe a process of identification and incorporation that occurs when they are adults, through grace-given but also directed practices. For Beatrice and Ebner, the idealized object of love and loss is, of course, Christ. Through their identification with Christ and memorialization of Christ's Passion, they transform themselves into Christ. This gives us a key to understanding Freud's stake in the loss of the father, for just as Christ is the centrally valorized figure for medieval religious women—and for medieval culture as a whole—the father may be said to occupy a similar site within modern Western culture. But what about our other losses? We can see clearly how Ebner conjoins her other, more fully human losses with the loss of Christ. Is Freud doing something similar when he refuses to acknowledge the loss of the mother—and other caretaking figures—in place of the father?

The psychoanalyst Melanie Klein suggests one way to broach both of the issues I raise here. In "Mourning and Its Relation to Manic-Depressive States" (1940), she argues that all mourning is melancholic and that incorporation is essential to "normal" mourning. For Klein, the internalization of the living others around us, as well as of the dead, is multiple and ongoing. The process of loss, identification, and incorporation constitutes subjectivity in childhood and continues throughout one's life. Thus Klein is able explicitly to link Freud's discussions in "Mourning and Melancholia" with those in "The Ego and the Id." According to Klein:

In normal mourning the individual reintrojects and reinstates, as well as the actual lost person, his loved parents who are felt to be 'good' inner objects. His inner world, the one which he has built up from his earliest days onwards, in his phantasy was destroyed when the actual loss occurred. The rebuilding of this inner world characterizes the successful work of mourning.⁴⁹

For Klein, we learn to deal with the absence of parents and other early caregivers through a process of idealization and internalization, generating a phantasy in which they constantly remain with us and are part of us. When we experience later losses, not only do we mourn them, but our parents and other caretakers are again lost. The internal world of good objects—and their place as constitutive of our subjectivities—is damaged. Successful mourning occurs when we are able, through identification with and incorporation of the newly lost object, to rebuild that damaged inner world.

⁴⁹ Melanie Klein, "Mourning and its Relation to Manic-Depressive States," in *Love, Guilt and Reparation and Other Works 1921–1945* (New York: The Free Press, 1975) 363.

Mourning, for Klein, is always melancholic, for it always involves processes of identification and incorporation grounded in a refusal fully to relinquish our lost objects. Melancholy is experienced pathologically—as ineradicable, disabling depression—when the subject has been unable as a child to establish a good inner world that will sustain her in the face of later losses. And, although Klein does not say this explicitly, melancholia also overwhelms the subject when the losses are too many, too overwhelming, for the “good” parents of her inner world to combat. (This is what I imagine happened to my great-grandmother.)

I would also suggest, on the basis of my work on Beatrice and Ebner, that inner worlds are not only created in childhood, but that they are created and recreated through bodily, psychic, spiritual, and mental practices. In other words, we can, to some degree at least, recreate or reshape ourselves in the image of newly idealized and internalized objects. The problem for Beatrice and Ebner, both of whom yearn for death, is that the idealized other they incorporate is idealized precisely in his suffering and death. Melancholia here feeds melancholia rather than allaying it—the death of the other leads to the idealization of and desire for one’s own death.

I return, then, to the dangers of melancholia. I can only speculate, but I think that for my great-grandmother, the enormity of her losses overcame the creative possibilities of incorporation. The lost others were too many and destroyed the self. For Beatrice and Ebner, not only the enormity of their loss, but also the very qualities of that object, led to their continued desire for death. Given these dangers, why would I want to reinstate it as constitutive of subjectivity? Why ignore the widespread disavowal of melancholia, a disavowal made not only on psychological grounds, but also theologically, philosophically, and politically, anywhere that we talk about the resurrection as the denial of death, of successful mourning as a forsaking of the lost object, or of utopias in which all loss will be overcome? Yet as Beatrice and Ebner, Freud and Klein all make clear, to disavow the subject’s melancholic constitution is to disavow the complex constellation of others who make us who and what we are. It is to disavow our losses and our grief as well as that which supports and enables our subjectivity, our agency, and, paradoxically, our responsibility. It is to deny our responsibility to the others within, and thereby to disavow that which makes possible our relations with others outside of ourselves, the very grounds of sociality from which our ethical and political projects emerge. The trick is to find ways to sustain ourselves in and through our losses, rather than in their disavowal. I’d like to close today with some brief reflections on the theological implications of these claims, and then conclude with a story, the only way I’ve found, so far, to gesture toward the intersubjectively articulated, immanent transcendence that is as close as I can come to an avowal of belief.

■ Theological Imaginings

Even those who most admire Freud generally dismiss his writings on religion as stupidly and willfully reductionistic—and, for those who know the history of nineteenth-century philosophy and theology, as wildly unoriginal.⁵⁰ Ludwig Feuerbach argues that God is a projection and reification of human capacities, values, and possibilities onto a divine other, the ideal being toward whom we as individuals and as a collectivity strive.⁵¹ To this Freud seems only to add, “and he’s your father.” In other words, Freud explicitly oedipalizes Feuerbach’s account of projection and reification. And whereas Feuerbach aimed to enable a kind of philosophical therapy whereby we might come to recognize divine capacities, values, goals, and aspirations as peculiarly human, Freud’s vision is more fully embedded in the guiding narratives of his psychoanalytic enterprise. When we recognize that it is the internalized figure of the father—the superego—that leads to our greatest accomplishments, to the heights of civilized behavior, artistic creativity, and scientific productivity, then we will no longer require religion. (Or conversely, those with the strongest superegos are least in need of religion.)

Despite critics’ repeated assertion that both Feuerbach and Freud reduce religion to human and psychic dimensions, I find myself wondering if they both don’t get something right—something that, curiously, has enormous theological ramifications. Freud is certainly reductionist with regard to religion, just as he is reductionist with regard to melancholy, in his suggestion that God is the projection of a lost object, and the only loss we mourn is that of the father. Freud’s texts, of course, are always more complicated—and more interesting—than this reductive reading can show. Yet even if we read Freud in this simplistic way, there is something right, I think, in his suggestion that what we know of the divine we know from others *around* and *within* ourselves. As yet, I do not know how to articulate the relationship between those two prepositions except by telling you another story.

The fact that I need to tell a story to get at the centrality of mourning and melancholia for the theological imagination raises a host of questions—about the relationship between narrative and theory; about storytelling as a mode of incorporation and the incorporations constitutive of subjectivity; about storytelling and theorizing as practices through which others are incorporated even as they are maintained in their exteriority to the subject. Beatrice and Ebner tell stories, and that is what I have done today. I point to these theoretical issues as the background against which I tell yet another story. For reasons I need to figure out, this one requires fictionalization. It’s not the whole truth—nothing ever is—yet it’s as true as anything I know.

⁵⁰ Among a number of crucial texts, I will only cite here Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo: Some Points of Convergence Between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics* (1913), SE, 13:1–161; Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (1927), SE, 21:5–56; and Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism: Three Essays* (1939), SE, 23:7–137.

⁵¹ See especially, Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* (trans. George Eliot; Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1989).

■ “The Goodness of Our Brother’s Heart”

They didn’t do eulogies.

The father liked often to announce that if any of his children attempted to eulogize him, he would haunt them remorselessly for the rest of their lives. The prospect was less frightening than intended—in the many years they survived him, all of his children longed for his presence, however ghostly. But still, when he died, they’d honored his wishes and kept their love to themselves.

Other losses followed, in what sometimes felt to the survivors like one long endless funeral reception. Grandmothers, aunts, uncles. Their mother. All rigorously uneulogized. A brother, who died so shortly before his mother that there was no time even to mourn. Two sisters and a brother remained. Not Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, but those names will do as well as any others.

To Mary and Martha, although they never admitted it aloud, and certainly not to each other, Lazarus was an extraordinary human being. It was less his beauty they loved—although they loved his beauty, even as it faded—than his goodness. Lazarus, however, wasn’t only handsome and good, he was also troubled and unlucky, and it was difficult for Mary and Martha to decide whether his goodness led to trouble or if the one, like the other, was a sheer, astonishing accident. For Lazarus’s goodness had no cause and no traceable source. It had nothing to do with the categorical imperative, or the cultivation of virtue, or a utilitarian determination of the greatest good for the greatest number. It couldn’t be taught and it certainly wasn’t hereditary. But maybe, Mary and Martha thought, it’s just that he’s our brother and we love him. Maybe he isn’t any different than anyone else.

Despite such humbling thoughts, Mary and Martha worried about Lazarus. As they lost father, mother, and brother, they each thought quietly to themselves: please, not Lazarus. They couldn’t say why they thought this, but they did.

And then, an inevitability that still managed to take both sisters by surprise, Lazarus became ill. All three denied it for as long as they could—not that he was sick, but that the sickness would kill him. “I’m not ready to die *yet*,” he said to Martha.

Mary and Martha would have given up the no-eulogies rule for Lazarus, but after his death neither of them could speak—not coherently, at least, and not about Lazarus. Instead, they spoke through the songs and the readings of the Roman Catholic funeral mass his faith required. They chose passages about building an edifice for the Lord, about God as a mighty fortress, and the father’s house having many rooms. Lazarus was a builder and he had the greatest capacity for friendship and for love that either sister had ever seen. “No matter how you feel about the Bible,” Mary said, “somewhere in there it says just about everything.”

They thought about using the story from the Gospel of John about Jesus’ friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus—but under the circumstances it seemed self-serving, a public assertion of the superiority of their love for their brother over all other claimants. “More to the point,” Mary announced in the kind of wonderful feat of

projection at which she excelled, “we don’t want to upset anyone. They’ll hear the story, expect Jesus to come raise Lazarus up from the dead, and be pissed off when it doesn’t happen.”

So Mary and Martha stuck with the father’s many-roomed mansion. They called in their selections to the priest, an old family friend who had known their parents, and who had known Mary and Martha and Lazarus since they were children. The priest honored the no-eulogy rule and didn’t speak directly about Lazarus. But, whether through chance or design the sisters never knew, he read from the Gospel of John. He read the story of Jesus’ friends, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, and of Mary and Martha’s great grief and their great faith, and of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. And in his sermon, he spoke directly to the hearts of our Mary and Martha and he told them that their brother was not dead and that he would live forever.

But as Mary predicted, Jesus didn’t come and he didn’t raise Lazarus from the dead, on that day or on any other that the sisters lived to see. The priest saw their lack of faith and he spoke to it, but he couldn’t heal it, because he couldn’t bring their brother back to them. They were heartbroken and desolate and no longer sure even of Lazarus’s goodness, now that they could no longer see it before them, sense it in the world around them, know that it lay readily available on the edges of their worlds. The old worry—that his goodness had been a mirage created by their love—returned, and with that doubt any possibility of a reality transcendent to the anguish in which he had died was forever, irrevocably, destroyed.

(To hear your brother cry “Help! Help!” and to have nothing to offer but the morphine that will kill him. Mary held him down—sitting at the feet of the Lord—while Martha got the nurse with the syringe—and Martha was busy with many things.)

But as long as someone survives, there is always more to tell. No one ever raised Lazarus from the dead, but on the day Lazarus was buried an old woman and her husband told Mary and Martha a story. It was a story about their brother’s goodness, a story that showed them that Lazarus wasn’t only good in their eyes and in the reflection of their love (which in itself maybe should have been enough, but Mary and Martha were obsessed with “objectivity” and “truth,” a result no doubt of their overly-abundant philosophical educations), but he was good also in the eyes of at least one old couple. It was, Mary and Martha often said to each other in the long years they lived without their brother, a story about the kind of goodness that Jesus must have had; the kind of goodness that would make people tell stories about a man so good that he raised a beloved brother from the dead simply in order to staunch two sisters’ grief; the kind of goodness that has no discernible source and so renders belief in transcendence not only possible, but inevitable. Even if it can’t bring the dead back to life in the beauty and goodness of the flesh.

Perhaps no story can bear this weight without love. The woman told Mary and Martha that she too had loved their brother. He had built a house for her, the house in which she and her husband planned to live out their old age. She had dreamed of the house for years, its spaces and lights and shadows. She found the land for the house and Lazarus took her dream and drew plans. He came every week to talk over the work's progress, to ensure that her desires were met in each detail of its rendering. He gave her the house of her imagination.

As they planned and talked and gossiped, she told him about a drawer she had been lugging from house to house throughout her adult life. She'd inherited it from her mother, who had inherited it from her mother. It was full of broken and discarded religious objects. Catholic kitsch—Mary as Queen of Heaven with her crown of stars chipped, scapulars that wouldn't stick together any more, a baby Jesus whose upraised arm had broken off. Trash, but to this very pious family—grandmother, mother, aunts, maybe even a few uncles—holy and blessed objects that you didn't simply throw away. Yet how long, the woman wondered aloud to Lazarus, do you lug a drawer full of broken Marys and Josephs and Jesuses around.

The truth is, the woman's husband told the rest of the story because she, like Mary and Martha, could no longer speak. On the day the concrete was to go into the new house's foundation, Lazarus came and picked up the old woman, and he carried the drawer full of holy junk out of her apartment and put it in the flatbed of his truck. (This is the way the husband told the story.) Together Lazarus and the woman went to the building site and Lazarus helped her climb down into the pit that he and his workmen had dug for the foundation. He followed her down, carrying the drawer. Together, Lazarus and the old woman lay Mary and Joseph and Jesus and whoever or whatever else was in the drawer on the freshly turned dirt.

"He thought of that," the old woman said.

("He *did* it," Mary and Martha both thought, simultaneously, to themselves.)

The man and the woman lived out the rest of their lives in the house of their dreams. A house embedded with her family's faith. A house—in the words Mary told Martha or Martha told Mary, night after night for the rest of their lives—"a house built with the labor of our brother's hands, with the goodness of our brother's heart."

Of my brother's—my brother Daniel's—heart.

From Jesus to Shylock: Christian Supersessionism and “The Merchant of Venice”

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In 1943 the SS *Gauleiter*, “district administrator,” of Vienna, Baldur von Schirach, commissioned a performance of *The Merchant of Venice* at the famed *Burgtheater* to celebrate the deportation of all the Jews; Vienna had become *Judenrein* “cleansed of Jews.”¹ When Werner Krauss, the Nazis’ leading actor, first appeared on stage as Shylock, he made the audience shudder. According to the newspaper account:

With a crash and a weird train of shadows, something revoltingly alien and startlingly repulsive crawled across the stage. . . . The pale pink face, surrounded by bright red hair and beard, with its unsteady, cunning little eyes; the greasy caftan with the yellow prayershawl slung round; the splay-footed, shuffling walk; the foot stamping with rage; the claw-like gestures with the hands; the voice, now bawling, now muttering—all add up to a pathological image of the East European Jewish type, expressing all its inner and outer uncleanness, emphasizing danger through humor.²

*Harvard’s first endowed lectureship, a bequest of Paul Dudley (1675–1751), on natural and revealed religion.

¹ Rodney Symington, *The Nazi Appropriation of Shakespeare: Cultural Politics in the Third Reich* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 2005) 250–51.

² The critic’s comments are recorded in Werner Krauss, *Das Schauspiel meines Lebens. Einem Freund erzählt* (Stuttgart: H. Goverts, 1958) 199–209; cited by John Gross, *Shylock: A Legend and Its Legacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992) 322.

Numerous stage productions of *The Merchant of Venice* took place in Germany during the first years of the Third Reich, and German radio broadcast it shortly after *Kristallnacht*, the Reich pogrom that brought about the end of viable Jewish life in Germany 9–10 November 1938.³ Hitler and his propaganda minister, Josef Goebbels, knew how to manipulate master narratives, and Shylock had long been a central figure in the Western imagination. Shylock represented the Jew as depraved, not so much as a satanic anti-Christ, but as a more human, realistic figure—as an anti-Jesus.

Jesus and Shylock embody the range of stereotypes regarding Jews and are probably the most influential Jewish figures in the Western Christian imagination. Jesus has been the model for goodness, although not because of his Jewishness, while Shylock has been the model for wickedness, precisely because he is a Jew. The presence of Jewish teachings within Christianity was countered by Christian theological supersessionism, yet the anxiety over that presence could not entirely be repressed. Jesus' Jewish background became a central problem with the rise of the quest for the historical Jesus. Both Jesus and Shylock are figures that negotiate the presence of Jewishness within the Christian realm. Through Jesus, central elements of Judaism's theology were brought to the heart of Christian theology, while through Shylock, the alien Jew became resident in Christian Venice.

Uncovering the historical context of Jesus' life and teachings brought the Jewish essence of his message to the fore. Jewish scholars since the early nineteenth century have enjoyed emphasizing that characteristic of Jesus as a loyal Jew, while Christian scholars were uncomfortable with such a claim, which denied the originality and uniqueness of Jesus.

By the early twentieth century, some Protestants had developed racist arguments that Jesus was not a Jew but an Aryan whose intention was the destruction of Judaism. Shylock, as the anti-Jesus, represents the figure of the Jew in the midst of the Christian world, who poisoned it from within.

Assimilation of Jews into Christian society and the possibility of Jewish conversion to Christianity are central concerns of the play and reflect the disquiet of Shakespeare's era. The small but successful community of French Jews in medieval England had fallen into disfavor with the rise of English nationalism in the twelfth and thirteenth century, which resulted in their expulsion in 1290.⁴ While no recognized community of Jews existed in England during Shakespeare's lifetime, so-called "New Christians" had entered the country and flourished but had also attracted mistrust. The personal physician to Queen Elizabeth I, Rodrigo Lopez, a baptized Jew, came under suspicion for attempting to poison her. He was hanged

³ James Shapiro, "Shakespeare and the Jews," in: *The Merchant of Venice* (ed. Martin Coyle; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998) 73–91; at 90.

⁴ Salo Wittmayer Baron, *Late Middle Ages and Era of European Expansion 1200–1650* (vol. 11 of *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*; 2d ed.; New York: Columbia University Press, 1967) 201–11.

in 1594 in a public spectacle well publicized throughout the country.⁵ Whereas in earlier centuries, Jews could simply be expelled as a foreign body, the early modern period, with its large-scale presence of baptized Jews, faced a different problem: the Jew was now concealed within the Christian, indeed, as a Christian. Yet the converted Jew, at least in the popular imagination, was not fully a Christian. The transgending that is so often at the center of Shakespeare's plots functions here as a transracial, transreligious identity: the Jew concealed in the theological appearance of a Christian. This unstable figure that was neither Jew nor Christian attempted to be both.

The difficulties in assimilating large numbers of baptized Jews into the church had become so fraught in Spain during the fifteenth century that scholars have recognized that the religious issue was infused with racial concerns: does baptism transform a Jew into a Christian, or does a Jew always remain a Jew, even when baptized? Such questions grew stronger as converted Jews—"New Christians" or, in hostile terms, "Marranos"—merged into Western European society, including sixteenth-century England. Race has for too long been mistakenly understood as a modern invention and as a repudiation of religion. The presence of the Jew as Christian, the Jew within the Christian, not only became the basis for modern racial theorists to reject the possibility of Jewish assimilation, which had been the promise of the Emancipation era, but reflected a theological problem for Christian self-understanding. Had Jesus, in fact, fully transformed himself from Jew to Christian? Would his own transformation offer a legitimizing basis for the transformation of all Jews into citizens of European society? At stake was the rivalry between religion and race both as a basis for the nation-state and as the basis for personal identity.

The problem of the Jewish presence at the heart of Christianity, not new or limited to historicist scholars of the New Testament, has long been negotiated through a variety of techniques—visual and written, popular and scholarly—in the presentation of Jesus' identity. The modern combination of religion and nationalism, both of which infuse blood with profound, transcendent meaning, became a formula for producing the concept of race, which further inflected Christian theologians' views of Jesus the Jew. The figure of Shylock, who has been presented on stage since the seventeenth century in a range of interpretations—as comic, tragic, heroic, sympathetic, and repugnant—can also be read for allusions to the question of the Jewish presence within the Christian realm and also for its connections with race. In the play's explorations of body and soul, money and blood, fathers, daughters, patrimony, marriage and conversion, religious difference, and transgending, *The Merchant of Venice* expresses Christian concerns, racial and theological, about Jews. The sources for the play's plots—"the three caskets" and "the bond of flesh" from the *Gesta Romanorum*—were not particularly theologi-

⁵ Dominic Green, *The Double Life of Doctor Lopez: Spies, Shakespeare, and the Plot to Poison Elizabeth I* (London: Century, 2003).

cal; Shakespeare added the biblical and theological allusions.⁶ The play, open to many interpretations, transmitted Christian theological and political conundrums regarding Jesus' Jewishness and Jewry, in general, to a wider audience, and such conundrums could easily be tilted according to the interpretation of the particular production. Those interpretations, in turn, correlate to the fluctuating problem of determining Jesus' identity as Jew or Christian and the status of Jews in society. Shylock underwent a positive transformation in the modern era, coinciding with Jewish emancipation in Europe. Initially presented as a comic figure on stage, and in the eighteenth century as a menacing figure, Shylock was transformed into a noble, tragic figure in the major nineteenth-century productions, representing the Jew who had been badly mistreated by Christian society but was not degenerate by nature. Still, the depraved Shylock always lurked in the imagination, able to return with ease in the Nazi productions.

The interplay between religion and nationalism that produced race took place with the greatest clarity and with the most horrendous results in modern Germany. Even as theology was exploited by modern German nationalism and racism, nationalism and racism were tremendously appealing to German theologians. What did racism have to offer theology? Why was Protestant theology in Germany so quickly drawn to nationalist discourse, and how was racial thinking shaped by the specific conundrum of Jesus' Jewishness? Hedda Gramley in her book on *Prophets of German Nationalism* has argued that nationalism offered a "new basis of legitimation" and a "venue for justifying and creating meaning" within Germany that helped to ease the turbulent transition to modernity and to bridge the ruptures caused by the erosion of traditional values.⁷ Gramley notes that both Protestants and Catholics emphasized the "world-historical Christian duty of Germans" but based their nationalisms on different sources.⁸ While Catholics claimed that their faith provided continuity between the Holy Roman Empire and the present, Protestants presented the Reformation as a sign that Germans were God's elect and possessed a religious mission with universal significance. Nationalism was not a kind of political religion, Gramley concludes, but rather religion boosted nationalism's appeal as an explanatory mechanism even as religious vitality waned.⁹ At the same time, precisely with the infusion of nationalism into theology, Christianity, defined as the triumph of Aryan culture, gave new life to religion.

⁶ Giovanni Fiorentino, "Il pecarone di ser Giovanni Fiorentino, nel quale si contengono cinquanta novelle antiche, belle l'invention et di stile" (1554), in *The Old English Versions of the Gesta Romanorum* (ed. and trans. Sir Frederic Madden for the first time from manuscripts in the British Museum and University Library; printed for the Roxburghe Club, Cambridge; London: W. Nicol, Shakespeare Press, 1838).

⁷ Hedda Gramley, *Propheten des deutschen Nationalismus: Theologen, Historiker und Nationalökonomien 1848–1880* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2001) 20.

⁸ Gramley, *Propheten*, 90.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 395.

Modern racial thinking offered theologians a new basis of legitimation and a means to infuse modernity with theology. Paradoxically, the secularization processes that did so much to undermine the power of the Protestant church as an institution in Germany simultaneously allowed religious symbols to enter modern nationalism and political discourse and thus spread Christianity much further as a capillary power within society. One example is the widespread discourse of the early 1930s that Germany had been crucified in World War I and was being resurrected by the Nazi movement. The history of racism in Germany is the history of a transformation of Christian belief into the prime means of desacralizing German society, in which politics subsumed sacred symbols.

Both German nationalism and the racial anti-Semitism of theologians had protean natures, which appealed to right- and left-wing political interests. Germany's imagined nationalisms revitalized a wide range of political tendencies, which created not only political and cultural communities but theological positions as well. Indeed, theology made it easier for all points on the political spectrum to affirm nationalism and to accept racism by making both into Christian teachings. Similarly, nationalism offered Protestantism a role in the construction of the modern German state at a time when traditional theological claims were being challenged by the rise of historicism and science.

Racism, so central to modern nationalism, is often presented as the opposite of religion, and that classic dichotomy between religion and race undergirds the conventional distinction between Christian theological anti-Judaism and modern scientific racism. Yet that distinction fails to recognize the ways in which specific Christian theological teachings inform racial thinking. The German racial ideology that emerged in the late nineteenth-century expressed body-spirit dichotomies that exploited Christian incarnationalist theology. From its inception, modern race theory has stressed the inferiority of certain peoples' bodies as the literal encorporealization of degenerate morality and spirituality and has emphasized always the alleged threat posed by such degeneracy to supposedly superior races. Physiognomy has never stood alone. Rather, racial theory sees the body as a carrier of the soul and of its moral and spiritual qualities. Racists have worried about the spiritual threat of lesser races—and especially that of the Jews—because they regard the inferior bodies as vessels of corrupt spirits rather than causes of corruption.

The conundrum of race as incarnation is exacerbated by the supersessionist theology at the heart of Christianity's relationship to Judaism. In classic Pauline terms, Judaism represents Israel in the flesh, and Christianity represents Israel in the spirit.¹⁰ Yet if the spirit is incarnate in the body, then the Christian spirit finds itself ensared within the Jewish theological and scriptural body. The crucial relationship between body and soul characterizing modern racist discourse is a mirror of the body-soul dilemma at the heart of Christian metaphysics and is precisely the stamp

¹⁰ For examples, see Romans 7:5–6, 8:2; Galatians 5:16–18; and 1 Corinthians 15, esp. verses 44–49.

that Christianity has placed on Western philosophy.¹¹ In the christological schema well through the nineteenth century, Jesus' body constitutes his Jewishness, while his Christianness lies in his spirit; the body is inferior to the spirit, as Judaism is inferior to Christianity. Jesus' maleness provides the crucial clue: if circumcised, he is both human and Jewish.¹² Why supposedly superior races should be vulnerable to the degeneracies of inferior races remained an unresolved puzzle, as much as the death of Christ, the promised messiah and incarnate God, was a central difficulty for Christian theology.

As a religion of incarnation, Christianity rests on a fragile boundary between the human and the divine, the carnal and the spiritual, and the Jewish and the Christian. Its instability was highlighted both by the rise of theological historicism and by the insistence on Jesus' Jewishness pursued by Jewish theologians of the nineteenth century. Where, in fact, does Christianity begin and Judaism end? The figure of Jesus is the lynchpin: he is at once a Jew and the focus of Christianity. Jesus begins his life as a Jew but ends his life as a Christian. Shylock, too, begins as a Jew but ends as a Christian—or does he? Once his conversion is mandated, he disappears from the play and is not present in the final scenes of act 5. He thus rehearses the anxiety at the heart of Christian belief in Jesus: Can a Jew become a Christian? Can Judaism, the religion of the flesh, be transformed into Christianity, the religion of spirit? The anxiety over conversion is reinforced by the Protestant rejection of Catholicism's doctrine of transubstantiation, that the wafer and wine are transformed into the actual body and blood of Christ. Conversely, if Christ is present sacramentally in the wine and wafer, is the Jewish body of Shylock still present in the converted, Christian Shylock, the Jew and Judaism incarnate in the Christian?

Incarnation is linked to race within Christianity as well through the Virgin Mary in whose womb God's word is made flesh. The link between Judaism and maternity is figured in Christian self-understanding, as Lisa Lampert points out, in images such as Bernard of Clairvaux's reading of the olive tree in Paul's letter to the Romans. Bernard describes Christianity as sons who suck milk from the mother, Judaism, and as branches that suck the sap from a tree's roots. Thus Christianity supersedes the mother religion and holds fast the salvation "which the Jews lost."¹³

¹¹ David L. Hodge, "Domination and the Will in Western Thought and Culture," in *Cultural Bases of Racism and Group Oppression: An Examination of Traditional "Western" Concepts, Values, and Institutional Structures Which Support Racism, Sexism, and Elitism* (ed. John L. Hodge, Donald K. Struckmann, and Lynn Dorland Trost; Berkeley: Two Riders, 1975) 165–72.

¹² Leo Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). The disappearance in the modern period of art depicting Jesus' genitals, noted by Steinberg, is not so much an abandonment of the question of his human nature but the troubling specter that his circumcised genitals would reveal his Jewishness.

¹³ Sermon 79.5 in *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux* (ed. and trans. Kilian Walsh and Irene Edmonds; 4 vols.; Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1976–1981) 4:141–42; cited in Lisa Lampert, *Gender and Jewish Difference from Paul to Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) 25.

Maternity also links religious doubt with Jewishness. A text of antiquity in which the midwife doubts Mary's virginity and then finds her arm withered in punishment is linked in medieval texts, Lampert points out, to the doubting Jew. Medieval Christian texts about doubt and midwives point to doubt as tropes of Jewish and female but also suggest the anxiety over the actual dominance in medieval European Christian society of Jewish women as midwives, who brought forth Christian babies.¹⁴ Given the role of the midwife in determining the true patrimony of the baby, information secured by her during the mother's labor pains and transmitted to the father waiting outside the door, the Jewish midwife bore secret knowledge that might or might not have been transmitted accurately. She mirrored the role of Judaism as midwife to divine revelation. Has she transmitted God's patrimony of Christianity accurately? Christianity itself was incarnated and born within a Jewish world, as the modern questers for the historical Jesus recognized. As theology gave way to history, the "womb" within which Jesus' own religiosity developed was no longer that of the Virgin Mary, as in classical Christian doctrine, but in a historicist sense, it was first-century Palestinian Judaism. That Christianity was incarnated within Judaism was the great anathema for racist theologians of the Aryan Jesus, who sought to portray him either as seeking the destruction of that womb, Judaism, or as actually having been incarnate in the world of Hellenism. This fact of Hellenism, they claimed, had been suppressed and distorted by Jews.¹⁵

Because the physical and the spiritual stand in intimate relation, the visible body as a marker of an invisible spirit, hermeneutics became central to racism. If the spiritual is incarnate in the physical, the soul in the body, it is crucial to know how to read the external, bodily signs for indications of the internal, invisible spirit. In its incarnationist aspect, racial thinking reifies christianist thinking. Even those racial theorists who were utterly opposed to Christianity and had never read a work of Christian theology had nevertheless imbibed "christianism," in Sylvia Tomasch's term, which indicated the broader acculturation of the Christian within Western thought.¹⁶ One of the central arguments among German racial anti-Semites was whether Christianity had been locked in a battle with the Jews since its inception—with German Christianity infected with and desperately trying to overcome and destroy Judaism—or whether Christianity itself was a version of Judaism, which promoted a Jewish ethic that undermined the strength of the German nation. In both scenarios, the pure Germanic spirit is seen as beaten down by a Judaism masquerading as Christianity. For anti-Semites, who perceived Christianity as a

¹⁴ Elisheva Baumgarten, *Mothers and Children: Jewish Family Life in Medieval Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

¹⁵ Walter Grundmann, "Mendelssohn und Hamann," in *Germanentum, Christenum und Judentum. Studien zur Erforschung ihres gegenseitigen Verhältnisses* (ed. Walter Grundmann; vol. 3; Leipzig: Georg Wigand, 1943) 1–48.

¹⁶ Sylvia Tomasch, "Judecca, Dante's Satan, and the Dis-placed Jew," in *Text and Territory: Geographical Imagination in the European Middle Ages* (ed. Sylvia Tomasch and Sealy Gilles; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998) 275–300.

masquerade of Judaism, the only answer was a Germanic Christianity purged of all Jewish influences. Hence Nazi theologians argued that the notion of a Jewish Jesus was the result of a misinterpretation by Jesus' disciples, all of whom were Jews, and exacerbated by Paul, who corrupted Jesus' message with his Jewish-Pharisaic teachings. Jesus was himself not Jewish but a Gentile "Son of Man." When Jesus proclaimed himself the "son of man" he was really saying, claimed the Nazi theologians, "I am not a Jew."¹⁷ The underlying assumption is that Christianity, too, was Gentile in its origins but was inflected and altered by the Jewishness of the apostles and Jewish Christians and requires a thorough purging.

The rise of racial theory in the nineteenth century no doubt influenced shifts in theological scholarship. For instance, the historiographical model of the Tübingen School (1830s–1850s), which saw the first two centuries guided by a conflict between Jewish Christianity and Pauline Christianity, was overtaken in the 1860s by Albrecht Ritschl's model, which saw Christianity achieved through a process of emergence in which a religious purification during the first two centuries rid the Jewish from the Christian. Jewishness, neither wholly carnal nor spiritual, remained an undefined, vague threat that could purge either body or soul and enter the one through the other. It could pollute the body of Christendom with Jewish converts or through a corruption of the mind with Jewish theological formulations.¹⁸ Purity of the self could be achieved through a christianization of the self, a removal of the Jewish, just as purification from the Jewish marked the creation of the Christian. Thus the emergence in the early decades of the twentieth century of a racialized Protestant theology should be viewed not only as a response to political developments in Germany but also as a recognition of the aporia of Jesus the Jew as the first Christian.

The problem of Jesus' Jewishness was not limited to esoteric theological debates but was reinforced by nineteenth-century debates over Jewish emancipation. Added pressure came from the identification of Germans with Christ. Theodore Ziolkowski has argued that Goethe's Werther was a Christ figure and notes Goethe's own distinction between the Jesus of history and the dogma of Christianity.¹⁹ German political disloyalty could be represented through the historicization of Jesus as well. When Karl Gutzkow was put on trial for treason in 1835 for his notorious novel about religious doubt, *Wally die Zweiflerin*, among the damning passages read aloud at the

¹⁷ Walter Grundmann, *Jesus der Galiläer und das Judentum* (Leipzig: Georg Wigand, 1940); Peter Head, "The Nazi Quest for an Aryan Jesus," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* [JSHJ] 2 (2004) 56–90; on Lagarde, cf. Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961); Richard W. Lougee, *Paul de Lagarde, 1827–1891: A Study of Radical Conservatism in Germany* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962) esp. 144–49, 151–54.

¹⁸ Albrecht Ritschl, *Die Entstehung der altkatholischen Kirche* (2d ed.; Bonn: Adolph Marcus, 1857).

¹⁹ Theodore Ziolkowski, *Fictional Transfigurations of Jesus* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972) 46.

court trial in Mainz was a long description of Jesus as a Jew.²⁰ The German nation could not be represented through a Jewish Jesus, who was also mortal, but only through a historically transcendent, unique Christ. The representation by German nationalists of Germany in terms of the Christ story grew stronger in the twentieth century. Some divorced Christ from the Jesus of the Bible and made him instead an “eternal idea” not limited by biblical history, just as they presented the German nation as a transcendent idea unbounded by political conventions. Germany was identified in the Nazi era as Christ: crucified during World War I and resurrected by Adolf Hitler. Theologians and church leaders described Hitler in messianic terms as the second coming: “In the Person of the Führer we see the One sent by God, who places Germany before the Lord of history . . . we believe he is come for us as Christ.”²¹

Christian anxieties over the presence of Judaism at the very heart of its religion and the implications of that presence for an utter dissolution of Christianity’s existence as the religion of Jesus, were goaded by Jewish historians, who appeared eager to dismantle Christian hegemony over European culture and to emancipate themselves from the position of the politically and culturally colonized. The process of gaining emancipation was not simply a matter of attaining political rights for Jews but also an emancipation of the Jewish presence within the Christian. That emancipation functioned in Jewish theological literature as a kind of revolt of the colonized and marks the first generation in mid-nineteenth-century Germany of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (Jewish Studies), which continued to some degree in subsequent generations of historians well into the Weimar era.²² It also explains the politics behind the excessive focus of attention on Jesus by modern Jewish historians, who include the following: Isaac Jost, Abraham Geiger, Heinrich Graetz, Levi Herzfeld, Joseph Derenbourg, Daniel Chwolsohn, Leo Baeck, Joseph Eschelbacher, Felix Perles, among others. In language typical of Jewish scholars, the Jewish historian Leopold Dukes wrote, “To the question, ‘What did Christianity take from Judaism,’ we answer in one word: everything.”²³ Christian historians, by contrast, would typically argue, in the words of Augustus Neander, “In the outset,

²⁰ Karl Gutzkow, *Wally die Zweiflerin* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965).

²¹ Siegfried Leffler, *Christus im Dritten Reich der Deutschen. Wesen, Weg und Zielsetzung der Kirchenbewegung Deutsche Christen* (Weimar, 1935) 29–30; cited by Kurt Meier, *Die deutschen Christen. Das Bild einer Bewegung im Kirchenkampf des Dritten Reiches* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964) 8; for other, similar statements, cf. Gerhard Besier, *Die Kirchen und das Dritte Reich. Spaltungen und Abwehrkämpfe 1934–1937* (Munich: Econ Ullstein List, 2001) 256.

²² Susannah Heschel, “Theology as a Vision for Colonialism: From Supersessionism to Dejudaization in German Protestantism,” in *Germany’s Colonial Pasts: An Anthology in Memory of Susanne Zantop* (ed. Marcia Klotz, Lora Wildenthal, and Eric Ames; Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 2005) 148–64.

²³ Leopold Dukes, “Qu’est-ce que le Christianisme a pris au Judaïsme, ou de la morale dite chrétienne,” *Archives Israelites [AI]* 10 (1849) 14.

how unlike Christ was the legal spirit of Pharisaism, with its soul-crushing statutes, its dead theology of the letter, and its barren subtleties!"²⁴

Starting in the mid-nineteenth century, Jews also politicized the figure of Jesus and claimed him as a Jew as a means to justify their own emancipation in German society. In the 1860s, Abraham Geiger, one of the founders of the field of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* as well as of Reform Judaism, wrote a passage that became notorious among Protestant theologians: "He [Jesus] was a Jew, a Pharisaic Jew with Galilean coloring—a man who shared the hopes of his time and who believed that these hopes were fulfilled in him. He did not utter a new thought, nor did he break down the barriers of nationality. . . . He did not abolish any part of Judaism; he was a Pharisee who walked in the way of Hillel."²⁵ Liberal Pharisaism, Geiger argued, had deteriorated into rigid rabbinic legalism as a consequence of Christian anti-Jewish persecution but was being revived by Reform Jews. Christians wishing to follow the faith of Jesus, Geiger implied, ought to convert to liberal Pharisaism—namely, Reform Judaism.

Christian reactions were swift and outraged. Franz Delitzsch wrote that Geiger had elevated Hillel "in order to rank Jesus below him. . . . Hillel, however, left everything as he found it. . . . All history, on the other hand, proclaims what Jesus has become."²⁶ Geiger's comparison of Jesus with the Pharisees would endanger the position of Jews in Germany, Delitzsch warned. "Your words," Delitzsch warned Geiger, "sound to me ten times more horrific than the crucifixion."²⁷ Delitzsch's reply to Geiger remained vivid in the German Protestant imagination, and in the early twentieth century, Heinrich Julius Holtzmann, professor of New Testament at the University of Strassbourg, described Geiger as an example of "Jewish arrogance."²⁸

Christianity, at its heart a conversionary religion, bases itself on the particular conversion of one Jewish man to Christianity and of Judaism into Christianity. Ernest Renan presented Jesus as gradually emerging from Judaism to become an Aryan and was most responsible for introducing race into New Testament studies. In his 1863 monograph *Life of Jesus*, which sets the framework for the construction of the Aryan Jesus, Renan presents a geographical racism, which Halvor Moxnes

²⁴ Augustus Neander, *The Life of Jesus Christ in its Historical Connexion and Historical Development* (trans. John McClintock and Charles E. Blumenthal; New York: Harper & Bros., 1850) 35.

²⁵ Abraham Geiger, *Das Judentum und seine Geschichte. In zwölf Vorlesungen* (Breslau: Schlettersche Buchhandlung, 1864) 117–18.

²⁶ Franz Delitzsch, *Jesus und Hillel. Mit Rücksicht auf Renan und Geiger* (Erlangen: Verlag von Andreas Deichert, 1866) 7, 11.

²⁷ "Geigers Antwort an Franz Delitzsch," in *Jüdische Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft und Leben* [JZWL] 10 (1872) 309.

²⁸ Postcard from Heinrich Julius Holtzmann to Wilhelm Bousset of 2 July 1903, in University Library Göttingen, Cod. Ms. Bousset 60, Sheet 4. Cited by Christian Wiese, *Challenging Colonial Discourse: Jewish Studies and Protestant Theology in Wilhelmine Germany* (trans. Barbara Harshav and Christian Wiese; Leiden: Brill, 2005) 187.

identifies as follows: Galilee is the unJewish site of Jesus' preaching and is spiritually attuned to his message, whereas Jerusalem is the Jewish site of his death.²⁹

The question was whether Jesus was transformed from Jew to Christian, as Renan argued, or was simply born an Aryan, so that Christianity is an essentially Aryan religion, as the Nazi-era racial theologians argued. For Renan, the accomplishment of Jesus was to overcome his Jewishness: after visiting Jerusalem, Jesus "appears no more as a Jewish reformer, but as a destroyer of Judaism. . . . Jesus was no longer a Jew."³⁰ Christianity, for Renan, begins with Jesus' destruction of Judaism: "Originally Jewish to the core, Christianity over time rid itself of nearly everything it took from the race, so that those who consider Christianity to be the Aryan religion par excellence are in many respects correct."³¹ For Renan, one was not necessarily born an Aryan but became an Aryan through conquest of the Jewish by following the example of Jesus. Race, despite assumptions to the contrary, was not inevitably fixed but mutable. As Ann Stoler has noted, "the force of racial discourse is precisely in the double-vision it allows, in the fact that it combines notions of fixity and fluidity in ways that are basic to its dynamic."³² The instability of race, not its immutability, lies at the heart of its invention. Thus, whatever similarities could be demonstrated between Judaism and the written gospels were either accidental or were encrustations upon Christianity that could be purged. Renan thereby transformed the discomfort over Jesus' Jewishness into a further indication of the Aryan genius, which knew how to transform an odious Hebrew monotheism into a glorious Christianity.³³ The cleverness of Renan's argument was

²⁹ Halvor Moxnes, "The Construction of Galilee as a Place for the Historical Jesus, Part I," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* [BTB] 31:1 (2001) 26–37; idem, "The Construction of Galilee as a Place for the Historical Jesus, Part II," *BTB* 31:2 (2001) 64–77.

³⁰ Ernest Renan, *The Life of Jesus* (trans. Charles Edwin Wilbour; New York: Carleton, 1864) 224–25.

³¹ Ernest Renan, *Oeuvres complètes de Ernest Renan* (ed. Henriette Psichari; 10 vols.; vol. 5; Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1947–1961) 1142; cited by Maurice Olender, *The Languages of Paradise: Race, Religion, and Philology in the Nineteenth Century* (trans. Arthur Goldhammer; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992) 70; trans. of *Les langues du paradis. Aryens et Sémites, un couple providentiel* (France: Gallimard Le Seuil, 1989).

³² Ann Stoler, "Racial Histories and Their Regimes of Truth," *Political Power and Social Theory* [PPST] 11 (1997) 198.

³³ Ernest Renan, "Des religions de l'antiquité et de leurs derniers historiens," *Revue des deux Mondes* 23/2 (1853). Renan's study of Semitic languages, *L'histoire générale et système comparé des langues sémitiques* was published in 1855 to great acclaim. Awarded the Volney prize by the French Academy, he argued that Semites lack mythology because they are instinctually monotheistic. Lacking mythology was no longer viewed as a triumph over paganism but a deficit of religion, which reflected the Semites' intolerant and exclusivist nature and stood in utter opposition to Aryans in religion, language, and ways of thinking. George S. Williamson writes of Renan, "Compared to the Aryans, the Semites lacked scientific and artistic originality, had created no national epic or mythology, showed no ability to think abstractly, and could not organize large governments or military campaigns." George S. Williamson, *The Longing for Myth in Germany: Religion and Aesthetic Culture from Romanticism to Nietzsche* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004) 224. Judaism was unable to progress and developed a rigid legalism; the mantle of the classical prophets had

that it made room for viewing monotheism as a divine gift and Christianity as the successful human activity of transforming it. In his interpretation elements of the supernatural, racial, and historical could go hand in hand.

Heinrich von Treitschke, in an essay that launched the anti-Semitic outbreak of the late 1870s, wrote that the writings of Jewish historians constituted “a dangerous spirit of arrogance” and “a fanatical fury” against the Christianity that constituted the backbone of German nationhood.³⁴ Their claim of Jesus’ lack of theological originality and his immersion in the cultural and religious world of Judaism, which had been uncovered in the quest for the historical Jesus, stimulated a Christian backlash in the form of an effort to repudiate and eradicate all traces of Judaism from Christianity. This was not undertaken as a liberation of the colonized Judaism, however, but as a purging of the Jewish from within Christian theological teachings.

In the context of rescuing Jesus’ difference from Judaism, Protestants turned to racial theory in the hope that even if Jesus’ teachings were the same as those of his fellow rabbis, in his person or his race, he was unique. By time of Houston Stewart Chamberlain’s notorious 1899 monograph, *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, Galilee and Jesus became for Protestants not only Gentile but Aryan.³⁵ By the years of World War I, theological debates were underway about whether Christianity, a Jewish religion imposed on Germany, had any place in German society, whether Jesus was an Aryan, and whether the Old Testament should be eliminated from the Christian Bible. In opposition to those who advocated a revival of Teutonic myths and rituals, Protestants offered a dejudaized version of Christianity.

Marcia Klotz describes Germany in fear of reverse colonization and relates these anxieties to Nazism’s mass appeal.³⁶ Hitler did not simply portray Jews as *Untermenschen* but also as colonizers who had entered Germany to judaize it and were now pitting European nations against one another in a deliberate strategy to undermine European strength. Through a cultural miscegenation brought about by a supposed Jewish colonization of Germany, Germany was degenerating. Such anxieties, anticipated by Christian theologians, spurred an effort to dejudaize the religion, not in order to end Christianity’s occupation of Judaism but rather to end what they considered Judaism’s occupation of Christianity—an inversion of traditional supersessionism. By eradicating the Judaism within Christianity—which meant eliminating the Old Testament from the canon, purging the New Testament of all Jewish references, and declaring Jesus to have been an Aryan—they believed

passed to Jesus. Renan’s study set a new agenda for the next decades, sparked a broader European questioning of the value of monotheism, and encouraged a redirection of Christianity.

³⁴ Heinrich von Treitschke, “Unsere Aussichten,” in *Der Berliner Antisemitismusstreit* (ed. Walter Boehlich; Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1965) 10, 11.

³⁵ Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (trans. John Lees; intro. George L. Mosse; New York: H. Fertig, 1968).

³⁶ Marcia Klotz, “The Weimar Republic: A Postcolonial State in a Still-Colonial World,” in *Germany’s Colonial Pasts*, 135–47.

that they were purifying Christianity and making it acceptable on nationalist and Nazi terms. The genocide of the Jews represented a Christian expurgation and a cleansing; the colonizers' longing for virgin theological territory represented a metaphorical "theological bulimia."³⁷ In colonialist terms it meant eliminating the savage for the sake of civilization and making room for civilization to spread itself. It was not an effort at acquiring new colonial territory (such as securing converts to Christianity through missionary effort) but an expulsion and extermination based on an axis of theological morality versus degeneracy, which appeared parallel to the colonial civilized versus savage axis.

What was declared theologically was intended politically and socially as well. These church figures did not simply respond to anti-Semitic measures decreed by the Nazi government; they proposed them. In 1932, for example, the pro-Nazi German Christian movement called for a ban on marriages between Germans and Jews and anticipated by three years the 1935 Nuremberg Laws that outlawed such relationships.³⁸ In another example of theological anticipation of Nazi measures against the Jews, the concept of eradication became theologically concretized long before plans for the Final Solution as genocide were developed. At a small meeting of theologians in February, 1936, the pastor Julius Leffler, one of the founders of the German Christian movement, called for murdering Jews in the name of Christ.

In Christian existence there can be at any time a change of heart toward the Jew, and there must be. I can and must and am obligated as a Christian in my heart to have a bridge and find a bridge to the Jew, and still I must follow, as a Christian, the laws of my *Volk*, which are often very brutal, so that I succeed in the hardest conflict with the Jew. . . . If I also know that "Thou shalt not kill" is a commandment of God, or "As a Christian, you should love the Jew," because he is also a child of the eternal Father, so I can also know that I must kill him, I must shoot, and I can only do this if I am allowed to say: Christ.³⁹

Most remarkably, none of the theologians present at the meeting, including the ethicist Paul Althaus, professor of theology at the University of Erlangen, protested Leffler's statements. The dejudaization of Christianity was institutionalized three years later, in 1939, anticipating by over two years Hitler's formal plans for annihilating all Jews, finalized in October 1941. On 6 May 1939, several hundred Protestant theologians—professors, bishops, pastors, all sympathetic to the German Christians (*Deutsche Christen*)—gathered at the Wartburg castle, with its strong Lutheran and German nationalist heritage, to inaugurate the Institute for

³⁷ Susannah Heschel, "Theological Bulimia: Christianity and Its Dejudatization," in *After The Passion is Gone: American Religious Consequences* (ed. Michael Berenbaum and Shawn Landres; Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira, 2004) 177–92.

³⁸ See the "Principles of the Religious Movement of German Christians," first issued in June 1932, in John Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches* (New York: Basic Books, 1968) 339–41.

³⁹ The minutes of the theological discussion are held in the *Thüringisches Hauptstaatsarchiv*, Weimar, Germany, Bestand C 1400.

Research and Eradication of Jewish Influence in German Church Life (*Institut zur Erforschung und Beseitigung des jüdischen Einflusses auf das deutsche kirchliche Leben*).⁴⁰ Proposals to create a dejudaization institute had circulated in 1938 by leaders of the German Christian movement, and its establishment six months after the *Kristallnacht* pogrom of 9–10 November 1938, was an expression of approval of that pogrom and an effort to carry out its goals within the church as well in order to produce a *Judenrein* Christianity. Even as Institute leaders sought to justify the *Kristallnacht* pogrom by reference to Christian theology, Nazi propagandists broadcast *The Merchant of Venice* on German radio to bolster support for their actions against the Jews.

To achieve a thorough dejudaization (*Entjudung*) of Christianity, Institute members published a dejudaized hymnal and New Testament, a catechism proclaiming Jesus the messiah of Aryans, and a slew of theological materials detailing the violent degeneracy of Judaism. “We know that the Jews want the destruction of Germany,”⁴¹ proclaimed Walter Grundmann in 1938, professor of New Testament at the University of Jena and academic director of the Institute. Like other anti-Semites Grundmann explained his assault on Judaism as self-defense: “To this day the Jews persecute Jesus and all who follow him with irreconcilable hatred.”⁴²

The Institute’s dejudaized New Testament, *Die Botschaft Gottes*, expunged gospel passages describing Jesus’ genealogical descent from Old Testament figures (the Old Testament, in turn, had already been eliminated from the Bible). In militarized, Nazified language, *Die Botschaft Gottes* retold Jesus’ life with an emphasis on his triumph rather than defeat through death. References to Jewish names or places, as well as citations from the Old Testament were retained only as long as they expressed a negative view of some aspect of Judaism. If not, they were eliminated. Deleted, too, was any fulfillment in Jesus of an Old Testament prophecy, although the fact that Jesus knew of Jewish ways was preserved. For example, when Jesus taught in the Temple and asked the people why the scribes believed that the messiah had to be the son of David, the text continued, “The Volk listened to him gladly, as he hit the Scribes with their own weapons.”⁴³ The Institute published its hymnal in 1941 under the title *Grosser Gott Wir Loben Dich!* The book contained 339 hymns, all of which were purged of references to the Old Testament or Judaism and presented a

⁴⁰ Susannah Heschel, *When Jesus Was an Aryan: Christians, Nazis, and the Bible* (Princeton University Press, forthcoming). The best study of the *Deutsche Christen* is Doris L. Bergen, *Twisted Cross: The German Christian Movement in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

⁴¹ Walter Grundmann, “Das Heil kommt von den Juden: Eine Schicksalsfrage an die Christen deutscher Nation,” *Deutsche Frömmigkeit [DF]* 9 (1938) 1.

⁴² *Deutsche mit Gott. Ein deutsches Glaubensbuch* (Weimar: Verlag Deutsche Christen, 1941) 46. The “Vorwort” was signed by Walter Grundmann, Wilhelm Buechner, Paul Gimpel, Hans Pribnow, Kurt Thieme, Max Adolf Wagenführer, Heinrich Weinmann, Hermann Werdermann.

⁴³ *Die Botschaft Gottes* hrsg. vom Institut zur Erforschung des jüdischen Einflusses auf das deutsche kirchliche Leben; (Leipzig: Otto Wigand, 1940) 79.

militarized tone in several hymns. Hymns authored by non-Aryan Christians were eliminated.⁴⁴ Words such as Halleluja, Zion, Jerusalem, Psalm, Jehova, Jahwe, and Immanuel were removed, as were evocations of Old Testament terms such as “psalters and harps.”⁴⁵ Included were household prayers and hymns used in life cycle events that gave direct support to the Nazi regime. For example, a baptismal hymn composed for *Grosser Gott* was “Tender child of German blood.” Christ’s blood and his resurrection were de-emphasized, as in the baptismal formula, “We baptize you that you may be consecrated and brave in life, faithfully committed to the Volk [German people] in a new time in truth.”⁴⁶

The dejudaization of Christianity was not simply a theological project but had intended social consequences that were made explicit. In 1942, the year during which most European Jews were murdered, Grundmann wrote,

“Should one be upset about Germany’s attitude toward the Jews . . . Germany has the historical justification and historical authorization for the fight against the Jews on its side! To prove this statement is the special concern of this work; and later research cannot alter anything about this statement! So this work serves the great fateful fight of the German nation for its political and economic, spiritual and cultural and also its religious freedom.”⁴⁷

Ridding the Jewish elements from the Christian religion proved not a simple task. Indeed, in the obsessive effort to dejudaize Christianity, members of the Institute—mostly professors of theology and pastors—found themselves immersed in the study of Judaism and trying to determine its nature and influence on Christianity. Nearly every declaration of Christian theology—messianism, election, kingdom of God, redemption—and in every citation of the Old Testament, Judaism was being affirmed. Indeed, Institute members were well aware that while they could declare Jesus to have been an Aryan, Paul, the apostles, and the authors of the gospels remained Jews. Trying to dejudaize Christianity ultimately became a kind of theological bulimia in the sense of a constant, repetitive devouring of the Jewish elements and regurgitation of them in the hopeless effort to purge Christianity of all Jewish traces. In the case of Christianity, however, the child (Christianity) devours and vomits the parent (Judaism) in order to purge itself of the Jewish

⁴⁴ A sole exception was the Dutch hymn, “Wir treten zum Beten an,” which had been translated into German by the 19th century Austrian writer Joseph Weyl, a non-Aryan. See Birgit Gregor, “vom jüdischen Einfluss befreit,” in *Thüringer Gratwanderungen. Beiträge zur fünfundsiebzigjährigen Geschichte der evangelischen Landeskirche Thüringens*; herausgegeben von Thomas A. Seidel im Auftrag der Evangelischen Akademie Thüringen und der Gesellschaft für Thüringische Kirchengeschichte e.V.; (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1998) 213–14.

⁴⁵ Doris L. Bergen, “*One Reich, One People, One Church*”: *The German Christian Movement and the People’s Church, 1932–1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996) 509; see also, Dissertation History Department, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1991.

⁴⁶ Gregor, “vom jüdischen Einfluß befreit,” *Thüringer Gratwanderungen*, 138.

⁴⁷ Walter Grundmann and Karl Friedrich Euler, *Das religiöse Gesicht des Judentums. Entstehung und Art* (Leipzig: Verlag Georg Wigand, 1942) Vorwort.

mother, whose presence can never be fully eradicated from Christian theology. The bulimia metaphor captures the deeper conflict within Christian theology, which derives religious identity from the mother and yet needs to differentiate from the mother in order to achieve a separate, independent identity.⁴⁸ The Jew as the haunt of the European Christian imagination has become a common theme in contemporary theory. Jean Francois Lyotard, for example, distinguishes between Jews and “jews,” the latter referring to the imagined figure that is often evasive, fluctuating, and enigmatic.⁴⁹ For Slavoj Zizek, Jews are a “symptom” of society, representing a fantasized barrier to an ultimate apotheosis.⁵⁰ As such, the Jew is a hermeneutical device central to Christian theology, which also insists that Jews possess a unique, carnal hermeneutics considered different and inferior to the spiritual hermeneutics of Christians. In the figures of Jesus and Shylock, two specters are evoked: the one symbolizes Christianity’s traditional hope of what a Jew might become—meaning Jesus, or a Christian—and the other symbolizes what happens when the Jew remains a Jew as symbolized in the bitter and usurious Shylock. The horror underlying *The Merchant of Venice* is the church’s failure to have converted the Jews, but that horror is also fed by a belief that conversion will not eradicate what is repellent about Jews and will open Christian society to them. Race remains ineradicable even in the presence of the baptismal sacrament.

Yet Christianity, too, created its own ineradicable theological trap: the religion of mercy and forgiveness came into being through a sin that Christian culture considered unforgivable, the Jews’ act of deicide. No repentance is possible, since the Jews cannot acknowledge the act of deicide without acknowledging Jesus as Christ, itself an act of conversion, not atonement. To explain the Jews’ sinfulness, Christians have to define them as degenerate by nature. However, their degeneracy means they have acted not in sin but in accordance with their nature—hardly satisfying to a Christian theology of sinful deed. It is a terrible dilemma, almost comic, had not the historic punishments of the Jews for that sin been so harsh. On the other hand, what sort of mercy does the Christian court offer Shylock? As punishment for his refusal to convert his alleged vengeance into forgiveness, his property is confiscated and he is offered the alternative of death or conversion, itself the death of his identity and spirit. Conversion comes to him as the climax of a scene of protracted, verbal sadism on the part of Portia, who clearly knows the trap she is setting as she presents her prosecution, always addressing him as “Jew,” not “Shylock.” Even when he finally agrees to accept the money instead of Antonio’s flesh, Portia continues:

⁴⁸ Heschel, “Theological Bulimia,” 177–92.

⁴⁹ Jean François Lyotard, *Heidegger and “the jews”* (trans. Andreas Michel and Mark Roberts; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990).

⁵⁰ Slavoj Zizek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (New York: Verso, 1989) 125.

PORTIA

Soft!

The Jew shall have all justice; soft! no haste:
He shall have nothing but the penalty . . .

PORTIA

Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.
Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more
But just a pound of flesh: if thou cut'st more
Or less than a just pound, be it but so much
As makes it light or heavy in the substance,
Or the division of the twentieth part
Of one poor scruple, nay, if the scale do turn
But in the estimation of a hair,
Thou diest and all thy goods are confiscate . . .

PORTIA

Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture . . .

PORTIA

He hath refused it in the open court:
He shall have merely justice and his bond . . .

PORTIA

Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,
To be so taken at thy peril, Jew . . .

PORTIA

Tarry, Jew:
The law hath yet another hold on you.
It is enacted in the laws of Venice,
If it be proved against an alien
That by direct or indirect attempts
He seek the life of any citizen,
The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive
Shall seize one half his goods; the other half
Comes to the privy coffer of the state;
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
Of the duke only, 'gainst all other voice.
In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st;
For it appears, by manifest proceeding,
That indirectly and directly too
Thou hast contrived against the very life
Of the defendant; and thou hast incurr'd
The danger formerly by me rehearsed.
Down therefore and beg mercy of the duke . . .

PORTIA

Art thou contented, Jew? What dost thou say?

For the court of Venice getting rid of Shylock (metaphorically excising Judaism) was not so simple. Converting and accepting him into Christian society would violate the long-standing Christian wish to eradicate the Jewish influence from within. The dilemma points to the desire that can never come to fruition without destroying the foundations of Christianity's legitimacy as fulfilling the divine promises of the Old Testament. While the courtroom scene on one level concerns the Venetians' dislike of Jews, on another level, it is also an intratheological Christian conundrum. Shylock, after all, is reenacting the Christian story of Jesus' sacrifice of his flesh as an act of atonement for the world.

Interpretations of the play are manifold, even as its own configurations of the Jew-Christian relationship are diverse and complex. Jacques Derrida proclaimed that the play "perhaps recapitulates the entire history of forgiveness, the entire history between the Jew and the Christian" in the court's declaration, "Then must the Jew be merciful."⁵¹ Derrida claims that Shylock "represents every Jew, the Jew in general in his *differend* with his Christian counterpart."⁵² Yet the logic of the play's plot does not simply recapitulate the Christian defamation of Judaism, but calls our attention to the hypocrisy of Christian declamations through its literal and theologically figural transvestism. Shakespeare's magnificent rendition of a courtroom scene pits Portia, disguised as a man and speaking the logic of the male world of Talmudic casuistry disguised as Christian mercy, against Shylock, whose Jewishness she feigns at first not to recognize. "Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?" she asks in entering the courtroom (4.1.171). She conceals not only her gender but her motives: she has come not to defend but to defeat Antonio (and Venice) along with Shylock to become the real merchant of the play and to gain control of the wealth and its dispersion. While pretending to demand Shylock's forgiveness of the debt, Portia "is already attempting to convert him to Christianity," as Derrida points out.⁵³ Shylock, the male Jew who is about to be emasculated by the court, ostensibly symbolizes the old law, Judaism, while Portia, the female disguised as a male, speaking of mercy and enacting harsh punishment, represents the young dispensation, Christianity. The benevolence that Portia invokes—"The quality of mercy is not strain'd, It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven" (4.1.181–182)—is juxtaposed to Shylock's insistence on the legality of his bond, and yet ironically Portia's hairsplitting legalism, not mercy, triumphs over Shylock and defeats him, at least according to the plot of the play, which abandons Shylock with the end of act 4. Indeed, Christian Portia's insistence on vengeance brings about the Jew Shylock's ruin for the sake of protecting Christian blood. The female Christian "out-legalizes" the male Jew in the rabbinic *pilpul* that he has developed and decircumcizes him in forcing his baptism. Her words evoke those of Jesus and

⁵¹ Jacques Derrida, "What is a 'Revelant' Translation?" *Critical Inquiry* [CI] 27 (2001) 174–200, at 186.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 193–94.

the New Dispensation and yet rest on the literal-mindedness that Christians claim characterizes Jewish hermeneutics:

This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood,
The words expressly are “a pound of flesh”:
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh,
But in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are (by the laws of Venice) confiscate
Unto the state of Venice (4.1. 301–308).

Shakespeare is not being theologically didactic but uses irony to call the categories of Christian theology into question. Portia, the advocate of mercy, is the figure who becomes the clever, legalistic Jew—but only transvestially dressed as a man. Jesus, too, by analogy can only become the one who dispenses with the law if his teachings are read through a Christian lens; the Jewish reading of his teachings places him squarely within Pharisaic hermeneutical tradition. Shylock’s Jewishness is signified in the play not through his faith or practice, but as constructed by a Christian theological narrative that is dedicated to its eradication—and he knows it well: “You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog, And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,” he says to Antonio (1.3.102–3). In the Christian mirror, Shylock recognizes, the Jew is not an unbeliever but far worse, a misbeliever, a misreader of the Scriptures that prefigure Christ, and a dog who, in Christian exegesis, is the figure of the Jew, who is not to receive “that which is holy” (Matthew 7:6).⁵⁴ The denigration results not in Shylock’s self-contempt but in his contempt for the Christian Antonio, who knows to spit on a Jew but not how to receive the kiss of divine revelation and to suckle the breast of Torah, as do Jews. “I hate him for he is a Christian,” (1.3.32) Shylock says and thus fulfills the old Christian assumption of Jewish hatred, a helpful justification for Christian persecution of Jews, exploited by Grundmann and his theological colleagues in declaring that Germany was fighting a defensive war against the Jews. The presence of Jews within the Christian realm of Venice evokes an anxiety with a long heritage in Christian self-consciousness. Will the Jews be converted to Christianity, or will the Christian become judaized? Launcelot expresses that fear when he tells his blind father, “I am a Jew if I serve the Jew any longer” (2.2.106–7). If converted, will Jews become authentic Christians, and if judaized, will Christians lose their morals and their families? Antonio comments sarcastically, “The Hebrew will turn Christian: he grows kind,” (1.3.175). The implication becomes clear: however kind Shylock may appear, he can never be a real Christian. The gnosis of the play is that its Christians are hardly kind.

The threat of Shylock to the Venetians is eliminated by Portia, who enters the old, male, Jewish order of law and courtroom to transform Shylock, putatively,

⁵⁴ For a study of medieval images of Jew as dog, see Kenneth Stow, *Jewish Dogs: An Image and Its Interpreters: Continuity in the Catholic-Jewish Encounter* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2006).

into a Christian and to make him the generous father of the newly baptized Jessica, whom he had renounced as his heir. Portia forces Shylock to become the father of the emergent Christian and to turn over his heritage to his daughter, who has become what Jews should be, a Christian. The punitive conversion of Shylock demanded at the end of act 4 is an eradication of his very existence, which takes away his livelihood, his home, his property, and his ability to earn an income. His disappearance from the play undergirds the anxiety: Can the Jew in fact become a Christian? Shylock's emasculation and dejudaization occurs in collusion between Portia, who takes his money, and Jessica, who steals his lineage: "two stones, two rich and precious stones, Stol'n by my daughter" cries Shylock, according to Solanio, in bemoaning his lost progeny (2.8.20–21). Jessica, in turn, has been the erotic Jewess, who takes the family jewels when she leaves her father's home and then discovers that she is isolated and unwanted as Lorenzo's new bride in act 5.

The impossibility of converting a Jew into a Christian not only throws open the question of Jesus' own identity but also of key doctrines of the church. Within the play, a central question is transubstantiation: If Protestants have rejected the literal transubstantiation of wine and wafer into blood and flesh, can the Jew truly be transformed into a Christian? Is it possible for Christianity to emerge from Judaism? The play raises the question of what constitutes the authentic patrimony or bloodline of Christianity. Can Shylock or Jessica become a true Christian? What of the Jewish blood that she will bring to the offspring of Lorenzo? Christianity itself begins its conversion from Judaism with the shedding of Jewish blood, the blood of Jesus, which indicates a conversion through crucifixion and the destruction of the Jewish body to become the spiritual Christian. When Shylock is said to want to carve a pound of flesh from Antonio, it is from his breast. The play enacts the Christian projective fantasy of the Jew stabbing Christ in the heart rather than sucking from his breast and wanting his blood rather than his milk.⁵⁵

As the Old Testament takes its place as the basis for Christian identification of Jesus the Jew as the promised messiah, and as moneylending becomes the basis for capitalism, so Shylock lives as a usurer within Venice. The play conflates money, blood, and faith, as Shylock's conversion is not the transubstantiation of his Judaism into Christian faith, but the liquidation of his business and its transfer to Portia's Christian realm, the island of Belmont, along with his daughter, Jessica, and his bloodline. Portia, who acquires and showers wealth where she pleases, demonstrates that "money . . . is the true spirit of capitalism made flesh, the incarnation

⁵⁵ The motif of Jews stabbing Christ lies behind medieval Christian accusations of Jewish host desecration. See, for example, the fifteenth-century English play, "The Croxton Play of the Sacrament," in *Non-cycle Plays and Fragments* (ed. Norman Davis; New York: Oxford University Press, 1970). For a discussion of the motif of Jewish stabbing in the Croxton play, see Sister Nichola Maltman, "Meaning and Art in the Croxton Play of the Sacrament," *English Literary History* [ELH] 41:2 (1974) 149–64; and Lisa Lampert, "The Once and Future Jew: The Croxton Play of the Sacrament, Little Robert of Bury, and Historical Memory," *Jewish History* [JH] 15 (2001) 235–55.

and liquefaction of flesh and blood,” as Gil Adnjar has written.⁵⁶ Faith is translated into money, not for the Jew Shylock but for the Christian Portia.

The conversion of Shylock and Jessica does not resolve the unease but points to the unresolved question: Is Jesus a Jew or a Christian? What marks his Christianness or does he, too, undergo the kind of conversion, a moment that marks his transubstantiation from Jew to Christian, that Renan describes? Yet would post-Reformation doctrine make Jesus’ own conversion merely figural, as a “Jew who is but an allegory of the Christian”?⁵⁷ Not surprisingly, Shylock’s demand of Antonio’s Christian flesh arouses considerable anxiety: Will Shylock circumcise the breast or the foreskin as the two places on the body that signify the Christian and the Jew respectively? In some productions of the play, including Michael Radford’s 2004 film, Shylock, played by Al Pacino, murmurs a Hebrew prayer as he takes up his knife, as if he were a *mohel* (ritual circumciser) about to circumcise Antonio and forcibly to judaize him by converting him into the covenant. Similarly, Anthony Sher’s 1987 Shylock on the London stage, produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company, donned a *talit* to cut his pound of flesh in order to make certain that the audience understood that the Jew, whether engaging in circumcision or ritual murder, was performing a religious act.

In Shakespeare’s time, as Lynda Boose has pointed out, nation and race were used interchangeably, but the latter was used to characterize not necessarily someone of “foreign” appearance but someone of a different nationality and religion.⁵⁸ The Marranos accomplished a shift in Christian identity from an acquisition through baptism to an acquisition through a performance dependent on proper hermeneutics, as Lampert writes.⁵⁹ To be a Christian meant the ability to interpret as a Christian, and the play emphasizes that only those of proper nationality and race possess such a talent; the Catholic Spaniard and Muslim Moroccan are unable to interpret the three caskets properly and thus lose the chance not only to win Portia but to marry at all. Christianness requires both nationality and race, which together create the peculiar combination of physical beauty and moral acuity demonstrated by Bassanio’s correct interpretation of the caskets. Race is marked not only by distinctive physical appearance but by a concern with incarnation, which means seeing within the external physical to perceive the internal spiritual. If, as Carolyn Dinshaw has argued, proper Christian exegesis is linked to erotic desire,⁶⁰ then

⁵⁶ Gil Adnjar, “Christians and Money (The Economic Enemy),” *Ethical Perspectives: Journal of the European Ethics Network* [EP] 12:4 (2005) 500.

⁵⁷ Thomas H. Luxon, *Literal Figures: Puritan Allegory and the Reformation Crisis in Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) 22–33.

⁵⁸ Lynda E. Boose, “‘The Getting of a Lawful Race’: Racial Discourse in Early Modern England and the Unrepresentable Black Woman,” *Women, “Race” and Writing in the Early Modern Period* (ed. Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker; London: Routledge, 1994) 36.

⁵⁹ Lampert, *Gender and Jewish Difference*, 27 and 140–41.

⁶⁰ Carolyn Dinshaw, *Chaucer’s Sexual Politics* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989); cited by Lampert, *Gender and Jewish Difference*, 156.

racialist thinking, too, acquires its appeal through its erotic wish to read the body and find the moral and spiritual potencies incarnate within it. Bassanio, like all the suitors, must divine the true, inner meanings of the caskets to win Portia, and Portia must see through the letter of the law and find its implied meaning in order to thwart Shylock; such talents are not given to the Spanish (Catholic) or Moroccan (Muslim) suitors nor to Shylock himself.

The figure of Jessica, as daughter and inheritor of the Jewish father, enacts the prophesied biblical supersession by Christianity of Judaism by attempting to escape an identity as Shylock's flesh and blood and spiritualizing herself as Lorenzo's idealized erotic desire, an effort that fails miserably; her marriage spells disaster for her father and also brings grave threat to Lorenzo. As an alluring, exotic beauty and a seduced seductress, her disconnection between outer appearance and inner essence threatens a nationality based on appearance and a theology based on faith. Jessica knows that her conversion to Christianity is motivated by eroticism, not faith, and this motivation reinforces the classic Christian aporia of Jewish conversion: with the Christian claim that no faith is possible in the heart of the Jew, the Jew's conversion would have to be unfaithful and simply a ticket of admission into European society, as Heinrich Heine once put it. The aporia mirrors the anxiety of Christian theological unfaithfulness toward its own Jewish patrimony, as expressed in a fecund statement by Gustav Volkmar, a prominent member of the Tübingen School, who writes, "The Judaism that formed the religious background to Jesus and Christianity was not the Pharisaic Judaism dominant during the Second Temple era, but 'the virgin womb of the God of Judaism.'"⁶¹ Christianity, in other words, was derived from Judaism and superseded it, but Judaism was not the offspring of God, who remained a virgin until giving birth to his first child, Christianity. Christianity has no older sibling but is the first-born son of the virgin, Christ himself. Yet even in denying that Judaism is a divinely revealed religion, Volkmar is unable to remove it from Christian genealogy. Possessing a kind of family knowledge of Christianity's Old Testament ancestry, Judaism's archive forms the basis upon which Christian claims to fulfillment of divine promise rest. As archive, Judaism cannot be distanced or excised from Christian theology, but exists as the sign of covenant that must be at once upheld as genuine and yet repudiated as superseded. It is the archive as circumcision, in Derrida's term,⁶² Judaism leaving its indelible presence in the flesh of Christian theology.

Jessica's seduction by Lorenzo represents a motif typical of colonialist fantasy; the seduction of the alien female joins the play's concerns with the alien Jew living in Christian Venice and the dangers of miscegenation. The Jewess, as a figure who

⁶¹ Gustav Volkmar, *Die Religion Jesu und ihre erste Entwicklung nach dem gegenwärtigen Stande der Wissenschaft* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1857) 52; cited in Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998) 161.

⁶² Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (trans. Eric Prenowitz; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) 12.

stands literarily between Jew and Christian precisely because of her femaleness, represents a more specific problem to the Christian seducer. As Miri Rubin argues, the host desecration accusations require a male Jewish perpetrator because only male Jews, unlike women, could be seen as fully moral agents; females are pliant and lack reason and moral faculties.⁶³ The conversion of a Jewish woman thus carries a different resonance reinforced by the rabbinic anxiety that a man's maleness is fragile and easily lost if, for example, he walks between two women, and a woman's Jewishness is similarly fragile and easily robbed by a seductive Gentile. Similarly, while Shakespeare's *Othello* can imagine the marriage of a black man and a white woman, Othello and Desdemona, virility and beauty, *The Merchant of Venice* can imagine only a Christian man and Jewish woman; the gender politics of race are inverted with Jewishness. A Jewess may be easily divested of her Jewishness by marriage to a Christian man, whereas the marriage of a Jew to a Christian woman renders him emasculated without losing his racial markers. Jessica's flight from her father's home is invariably interpreted as further evidence of Shylock's degeneracy; Jessica herself is traditionally held blameless in most interpretations and productions of the play, as a victim who flees her abusive father. Audience identification with her is taken as least problematic, given the unpleasant characters surrounding her in the play. By contrast, Jewish productions of the play signal Jessica as the villain. Her elopement is key to her father's misery and transformation into an angry, vengeful figure; in some Yiddish revisions of the play, Jessica realizes her wickedness and commits suicide. She thus gestures to Jewish audiences that she did not abandon her Judaism for another religion but rather abandoned her father for the sake of her eroticism; internally and spiritually, she remains a faithful Jew.⁶⁴

The Yiddish versions of the play use Jessica as a warning against the seductions of the Gentile world. If Shylock was forced to become a Christian against his will, much as Jesus was "converted" after his death from loyal Jew into the image of the perfect Christian, Jessica stands for Paul, who, despite his training as a Pharisee, was seduced by pagan ideas and abandoned his Jewish commitments, at least according to the later Jewish imagination. Yet Paul's biography left some Christians anxious. Was Paul's seduction by Greco-Roman Hellenism sufficiently thorough to purge any remaining traces of his Pharisaic theology, or did he import his Pharisaism into the very bases of the Christian doctrine he established? For Protestants, Roman Catholicism was legalistic and carnal, much like Judaism—perhaps too much so. In the summer of 1944, Hugo Pich, a German Lutheran pastor who was one of the founders of the Institute for the Study and Eradication of Jewish Influence on German Religious Life, wrote to Bishop Walther Schultz of Mecklenburg, urging a further dejudaization of the New Testament to rid it of Paul's epistles. Schultz

⁶³ Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

⁶⁴ Joel Berkowitz, *Shakespeare on the Yiddish Stage* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002).

replied, "How can you suggest that we have been duped for 2000 years by some stinking Jew?"⁶⁵ Even Paul, the foundational theologian of Christianity, had fallen under suspicion as a judaizer, and Pich was his disgusted Lorenzo.

Act 5, which has troubled Shakespeare scholars for a long time and at times has been eliminated from productions of the play, acts as a climax in capturing the discomfiture of Jewish presence within the Christian realm. The scene at Belmont forces us to face the play's failure to fulfill what Lynda Boose calls the "comedic contract" of a Shakespearean play;⁶⁶ *The Merchant of Venice* is, after all, called not a tragedy but a comedy. In act 5, Lorenzo is no longer interested in Jessica after acquiring her in marriage, and rather than being a mark of his triumphal conquest, her presence cannot be integrated into the Belmont celebrations but is disruptive and even threatening. Conversion does not overcome Jewishness because the Jewess cannot lose her race; she is going to bring Jewish blood to Lorenzo's Christian progeny through the offspring that she will produce and will thus judaize his Christian bloodlines.

■ Conclusion

Shakespeare confuses categories in order to call them into question, particularly Christian categories of anti-Judaism. Thomas Luxon has argued that Shakespeare "lends his astonishing imaginative powers to support some very sophisticated and elaborate versions of Protestant anti-Jewish polemic."⁶⁷ While audiences of the play may find easy confirmation of their biases toward Jews, both the subversion of the play's pieties and the transvestial presentation of its characters suggest that Shakespeare's sophistication is mustered to undermine a theology of Christian anti-Judaism. Within the play, Christian mercy and forgiveness disguise the weapons of legalism and forced conversion. Those "Judaizations" actually occur through the machinations of Christians in their application of the law to Shylock in order to liquidate his assets and transfer his wealth to Portia's island of Belmont. Belmont exists as a ghetto of Christians, who practice not the universalism that is said to characterize their religion but the kind of particularistic, ethnic exclusiveness long said to characterize Jews. Portia, the Christian, governs not by mercy but by stern and relentless law: "Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?" indeed; which is the Christian, which the Jew? To read the play as anti-Jewish is to read it as Lorenzo reads Portia, as a "sweet lady" who drops "manna in the way of starved people" (5.1.294–295), a reading of Christian naivete but certainly not the way Shylock experienced Portia.

⁶⁵ *Landeskirchen Archiv*, Eisenach, Germany, C III 2a, folder: Institut 1938–1944. Letter from Schultz to Roenck, 2 August 1944.

⁶⁶ Lynda E. Boose, "The Comic Contract and Portia's Golden Ring," *Shakespeare Studies* [SS] 20 (1988) 241–54.

⁶⁷ Thomas Luxon, "A Second Daniel: The Jew and the 'True Jew' in *The Merchant of Venice*," *Early Modern Literary Studies* [EMLS] 4.3 (1999) 1–37; here, 16.

The anxieties surrounding Christian theological origins, differentiation, and conversion are reflected not only in the historiographies produced in the early modern era but in the popular imagination as well. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock, who appears in only five of its scenes, looms as its major character because he is a polysemic figure; as a tragic, ridiculous, threatening, and unfathomable person, he is an emblem of the complexity of the Jew in both Jewish and Christian imaginations. He symbolizes both Jew and Christian because he portrays himself as a Jew and, at the same time, mirrors the projected “jew” of the Christian imagination.

Shylock is not so much an anti-Christ as an anti-Jesus: Jesus is generous, but Shylock is usurious; Jesus preaches, but Shylock rages; Jesus offers his body, but Shylock demands the flesh of another. Jesus lost his life due to the unbelieving Jewish judges, who tried him in their religious court according to Jewish law, while Shylock loses his existence at the hands of Christian judges bent on vengeance. Both men are religious martyrs and martyrs to their sex and gender. Neither has a wife; neither leaves a bloodline. Like the synoptic gospels, which have been read both as anti-Jewish and as Jewish texts, *The Merchant of Venice* can be read as anti-Jewish or as anti-Christian, critical of Christianity’s anti-Judaism. The play accomplishes an exploration of the extraordinary, complex resonances that result from the idiosyncratic theological configurations of Christian supersessionism. Shakespeare has written a masterpiece because it resonates so strongly with Western culture’s master narrative of Jesus and his relationship to Judaism.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ I would like to express my gratitude for stimulating conversations about *The Merchant of Venice* with several colleagues: Timothy Baker, Lynda Boose, Lisa Lampert, Kathleen Biddick, Marilyn Reizbaum, Tom Luxon, Henry F. Smith, and Raph and Jane Bernstein.

Ekklesial Work: Toward A Feminist Public Theology¹

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Religion is deeply implicated in contemporary U.S. public life, as demonstrated in the increasing analysis of faith in any given presidential, congressional, or judicial candidate's political viewpoints; in ongoing presidential executive orders that approve government support and funding for faith-based initiatives; and in the continued lobbying by religious groups about a variety of moral and social justice issues such as euthanasia and immigration, to name a sample of recent flashpoint issues. What role do religious claims play in U.S. public life? How does Christian theology help clarify that role? What is the particular contribution of Christian feminist theology to understanding and rethinking that role?

Scholarly studies examining the role and influence of religion in U.S. public life are more frequently emerging from feminist perspectives, especially in the disciplines of ethics and theology.² These pathbreaking studies show that feminist religious reflection is concerned with the socio-political order but they do not yet fully articulate a feminist public theology, that is, a feminist theology of public life

¹ This essay draws on two public lectures that I delivered while holding the position of Research Associate and Visiting Assistant Professor of Women's Studies in Theology in the Women's Studies in Religion Program at Harvard Divinity School during the 2005–2006 term. I extend my deepest thanks to my institution for a junior sabbatical leave to pursue this research. I also thank Ann Braude, director, Women's Studies in Religion Program (WSRP); Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Francis Fiorenza, and Ronald Thiemann at Harvard Divinity School; my colleagues in the WSRP, Gannit Ankori, Constance Furey, Shahla Haeri, and Jia Jinhua; and my colleagues in the Boston College Women Theologians Writing Group, all of whom provided such a generous and inspiring intellectual community in which to undertake and share this research.

² For two recent studies, see Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Theological Bioethics: Participation, Justice, Change* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005) and Mary Doak, *Reclaiming Narrative for Public Theology* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2004).

and of political engagement.³ What would a feminist public theology look like? What would be some of its significant challenges and contributions to U.S. public theology as well as to contemporary theological reflection?

This essay represents one part of my larger study, a book-length manuscript in-process, that examines gender, religion, and politics in the U.S. context through the lens of public theology, i.e., theological reflection on the interrelationships of religion and U.S. public life. To study one aspect of these interrelationships, this essay aims to construct a feminist public theology, i.e., a feminist theological understanding of U.S. public life and of political engagement, by exploring one predominant strand of U.S. public theology based on its theological anthropology (or theological understanding of the human person-in-community); by opening up the possibility of redefining U.S. public theology and its associated vision, practices, and virtues of public life from a feminist theological perspective; and by outlining some implications of a feminist public theology for doing contemporary theology. In this essay, I propose that the theological concept of the *ekklesia* of wo/men⁴ elaborated by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza provides a potent theological resource for constructing a feminist vision of public life and its attendant practices as well as its virtues of political engagement. My main claim is that the *ekklesia* of wo/men affords a fruitful theological perspective from which to critically analyze as well as to constructively reshape and reimagine our visions, practices, and virtues of public life.⁵ What I will call “ekklesial work” brings to the foreground a major theological task of public theology: to create community, or, more specifically, to imagine and seek to enact a more just, egalitarian, and participatory political community in U.S. public life. Moreover, doing public theology with this task in mind can profoundly impact the locus of contemporary theology and the vocation of contemporary theologians.

■ Defining U.S. Public Theology

Public theology in the U.S. context participates in a long Christian intellectual tradition of theological reflection that addresses and seeks to clarify the relationships between church and world,⁶ or between the church and what historian

³ Public theology is often considered a subfield of Christian social ethics and focuses mainly on the contributions of religion to issues of pressing public significance. In this essay, I treat public theology as a kind of critical and constructive theological reflection on U.S. public life itself.

⁴ A detailed analysis of this term, and the inserted slash that helps capture more explicitly its original intended meaning, appears on pp. 445–447 of this essay.

⁵ As Sandra Schneiders observes, feminist theology “engages in a critique of patriarchy as an essentially dysfunctional system, embraces an alternative vision for humanity and the earth, and actively seeks to bring this vision to realization.” Schneiders, *Beyond Patching: Faith and Feminism in the Catholic Church* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991) 15. My essay follows this common feminist methodology to criticize patriarchal aspects of society, to reclaim alternate sources for theological reflection, and to actively construct an alternative vision—in this case, of public life.

⁶ J. Bryan Hehir outlines this heritage of public theology in “Forum: Public Theology in Contemporary America,” *Religion and American Culture* 10 (2000) 20–27.

Martin Marty called “the *res publica*, the public order that surrounds and includes people of faith.”⁷ More specifically, it consists of one major and multivalent site of theological reflection regarding the role of religion in an ever more religiously diverse society.⁸ Such projects of theological reflection include *public philosophy*, which is primarily concerned with interpreting the public significance of religious beliefs and claims through universally applicable philosophical reasons and warrants.⁹ *Civil religion* refers to certain nonreligious texts, beliefs, and symbols in U.S. political life that serve to unify a people around a common national identity (e.g., a flag, such as the U.S. flag after 9/11) or to reinforce national principles and ways of life (e.g., a constitution, such as the U.S. Constitution in recent debates about presidential appointments to the Supreme Court).¹⁰ *Political theology*, origi-

⁷ Martin E. Marty, *The Public Church: Mainline-Evangelical-Catholic* (New York: Crossroad, 1981) 3. Although *The Public Church* focuses mainly on the role of Jewish and Christian traditions in U.S. public life, Marty’s analysis forms a major basis of most twentieth- and twenty-first century Christian theological reflection on religion in the U.S. public order. Public theology represents one of the fastest growing bodies of contemporary theological scholarship; thus, its literature cannot be extensively reviewed within the limits of this essay. My analysis engages a few representative thinkers and texts in this subdiscipline of theology in the U.S. context, and thus addresses a small but significant portion of the actual output on public theology.

⁸ Martin E. Marty delineates several types of relations between religion and the U.S. public order as encouraged by civil religion, pluralism, legal frameworks of both disestablishment and free exercise, politicians and the media, voluntary associations, and conversation. Marty, “Introduction: Eight Approaches toward Understanding Public Religion and Politics in America,” in *Religion, Politics, and the American Experience: Reflections on Religion and American Public Life* (ed. Edith L. Blumhofer; Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2002) 1–15. Public theologies are at times placed into opposing camps, as in the contrast made between Catholic and Protestant public theologies (also called revisionist and post-liberal theologies). See William C. Placher, “Revisionist and Post-liberal Theologies and the Public Character of Theology,” *Thomist* 49 (1985) 392–416; Victor Anderson, “The Search for Public Theology in the United States,” in *Preaching as a Theological Task* (ed. Thomas G. Long and Edward Farley; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996) 19–31; and, more recently, Kristin E. Heyer, “How Does Theology Go Public? Rethinking the Debate between David Tracy and George Lindbeck,” *Political Theology* 5 (2004) 307–27. Public theologies are also classified according to modes, i.e., a defensive traditionalist mode, a moral order mode, and a critical modern mode; see Gaspar Martinez, *Confronting the Mystery of God: Political, Liberation, and Public Theologies* (New York: Continuum, 2001) 170–71.

⁹ Catholic theologian John Courtney Murray is the most noted representative of public philosophy in light of natural law. Murray, *We Hold These Truths: Catholic Reflections on the American Proposition* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1960). Some of Murray’s most noted writings are collected in *Bridging the Sacred and the Secular: Selected Writings of John Courtney Murray* (ed. J. Leon Hooper; Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1994); and *Religious Liberty: Catholic Struggles with Pluralism* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993). See also David Hollenbach, S.J., ed., “Theology and Philosophy in Public: A Symposium on John Courtney Murray’s Unfinished Agenda,” *Theological Studies* 40 (1979) 700–15; and David Hollenbach, S.J., “Public Theology in America: Some Questions for Catholicism after John Courtney Murray,” *Theological Studies* 37 (1976) 290–303.

¹⁰ Civil religion—usually based on distinctive, nonreligious symbols that are imbued with a religious aura—creates a people with a sense of mutual moral rights and obligations to each other and to a nation. However, it can lead to idolatry; civil religion post-September 11 in the U.S. can consecrate certain nations, religions, and social groups. See Robert Bellah, “Civil Religion in

nating in and moving well beyond its initial German theological context, urges social change through solidarity with the nonsubjects of history—a solidarity that is catalyzed by what Johann Baptist Metz called the recovery of the “dangerous memory” of suffering peoples.¹¹ *Populist theologies* consist of grassroots theologies, or theologies “from below,” that are articulated to support both conservative and civil rights movements.¹²

In my view, what unifies these theological projects is highlighted by the term “public” in public theology. As historian and theologian W. Clark Gilpin has observed, public theology is properly considered “public” because of its “convocative capability,” that is, its imperative to conjoin disparate groups (which mainly include church, academy, and society) into an “ultimate public.”¹³ Thus, the term “public” communicates a main purpose of this kind of theology: public theology acts on a convocative or community-building imperative to theologically envision and enliven a common political order that is designed to counter a potentially excessive individualism and a potentially divisive identity politics in U.S. public life.¹⁴

America,” in *Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditional World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970) 168–186; *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial* (New York: Seabury, 1975); and “Public Philosophy and Public Theology in America Today,” in *Civil Religion and Political Theology* (ed. Leroy S. Rouner; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987) 79–97. For the critique of civil religion as idolatry, see Michael J. Himes and Kenneth R. Himes, O.F.M., *Fullness of Faith: The Public Significance of Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993) 21. Nevertheless, civil religion challenges the claim that the modern “public square” is “naked,” stripped, or empty of religious symbols (i.e., symbols that function religiously) as a result of the increasing secularization of society; see Richard John Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984).

¹¹ Martinez, *Confronting the Mystery of God*, 65–68, 217; see chapter 2 for an in-depth analysis of Metz’s theological writings. On the impact of political theologies in the U.S. context, see Mary Doak, “Religion in Public: Dangerous Narratives and Practical Reasoning,” in *Religion in a Pluralistic Age, Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Philosophical Theology* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001) 119–30. For a more detailed analysis of the scriptural, theological, doctrinal, and liturgical bases of political theology, see *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology* (ed. Peter Scott and William T. Cavanaugh; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2004). For a careful distinction between civil religion and political theology, see Max L. Stackhouse, “Civil Religion, Political Theology, and Public Theology: What’s the Difference?” *Political Theology* 5 (2004) 275–93.

¹² See Mark A. Noll in “Forum: Public Theology in Contemporary America,” *Religion and American Culture* 10 (2000) 8–12.

¹³ W. Clark Gilpin, *A Preface to Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) 167–68. Gilpin highlights church, academy, and society as the three major publics to be addressed and interconnected in public theology (ibid. 160–72). He draws this classification from David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1981) 3–31.

¹⁴ On individualism, see Robert Bellah, “Public Philosophy and Public Theology in America Today”; and Robert Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (updated edition with a new introduction; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). For an analysis of more contemporary concerns with individualism and its result in social anomie and withdrawal, see Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000). On identity politics and its potential to further fracture and fragment common life, see Benjamin Valentin, *Mapping Public Theology: Beyond Culture, Identity, and Difference* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2002), esp. xiii–xiv, 67–80, 101–6.

If public theology centers on an imperative to convoke or make a public, to create a more comprehensive community among multiple groups, then what kind of ultimate or consummate public is envisioned in public theology? What kinds of practices and virtues of political engagement reflect and realize that vision of public life? The following analysis makes explicit this oftentimes implicit theological dimension of public theology in the U.S. context, namely, its understanding of common life. To this end, I explore one predominant strand of U.S. public theology with particular attention to its theological anthropology (i.e., its theological understanding of the human person-in-political community), its practices for engaging in that community, and its virtues for participating in that community.

In most public theologies the public is identified not with the state but with civil society, with a shared space of political inquiry and debate in a pluralistic democratic society. For example, the “public church,” according to Marty, helps cultivate a public within the U.S. political order, which he regards as a democratic assembly of rational civic discourse in which all citizens collectively deliberate and make decisions about their common life.¹⁵ The public or political order is construed discursively, and is characterized as well as constituted by shared norms and practices of rational argument, or rhetorical practices of giving and exchanging reasons in a deliberative model of democracy.¹⁶ Some major Catholic and Protestant figures in U.S. public theology, such as David Tracy, Francis Fiorenza, Ronald Thiemann, and Jeffrey Stout, identify the public order with a discursive realm of debate and deliberation that is defined primarily through public reason. As my discussion of selected writings from these figures shows, in a discursive vision of the public and its practices of civic debate, religious claims are introduced in the U.S. public forum in a widely intelligible way by using shared norms of rational democratic discourse. The goal is to address prominent public issues and policies from theological perspectives, which can in turn cultivate lively civic debate and perhaps begin to build consensus about these particular issues and policies.¹⁷

¹⁵ See Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (2d ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), as referenced in Richard J. Bernstein, “The Meaning of Public Life,” in *Religion and American Public Life: Interpretations and Explorations* (ed. Robin Lovin; New York: Paulist Press, 1986) 29–52, esp. 36–40. William Dean lays out the “republican” character of civic life in “Forum: Public Theology in Contemporary America,” *Religion and American Culture* 10 (2000) 1–8. David O’Brien associates this kind of civic debate with what he calls “republican Catholicism”; O’Brien, *Public Catholicism* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1996) 33.

¹⁶ Gary Simpson analyzes the integral role of communicative reason, as theorized by Jürgen Habermas, in our now common understanding of civil society as a shared public space of deliberative inquiry, argument, and action in democratic societies. *Critical Social Theory: Prophetic Reason, Civil Society, and Christian Imagination* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2001), esp. 131–34, for a clear and insightful summary of the contribution of Habermas to a deliberative model of democracy, as opposed to other political models of democracy.

¹⁷ Margaret Farley, “The Church in the Public Forum: Scandal or Prophetic Witness?” *CTSA Proceedings of the Fifty-Fifth Annual Convention* 55 (2000) 87–101, at 87–88; see also *Catholicism and Liberalism: Contributions to American Public Philosophy* (ed. R. Bruce Douglass and David Hollenbach; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

David Tracy considers the “public realm” a “shared rational space” that is enabled by “a shared concept of reason.”¹⁸ Participation in U.S. civic debate occurs through a communicative practice of rational, persuasive argument, i.e., the giving and exchanging of reasons for political positions and policies in a deliberative democracy.¹⁹ Tracy acknowledges that reason is socio-historically located and conditioned, but still defends its ability to establish a more comprehensive public realm without fueling competing and irreconcilable “particularist interest groups.”²⁰ In a pluralistic public life, reason functions to evaluate not the “origins” but the “effects” or implications of religious claims, symbols, and texts for the meaning of human existence, and especially the realities and possibilities of human life *together*.²¹ Tracy’s theological aesthetic figures prominently in his public theology, in that public/civic debate centers on the effects, products, or what he calls “classics” of particular religious traditions.²² The “classic” highlights the ways in which particular traditions deal with widely shared human concerns. If religious classics address persistent human questions about the limits and joys of human life,²³ then all persons can engage in a conversation that analyzes differing answers to these questions by using shared standards of rational argument, which for Tracy include intelligibility, truth, rightness, and reciprocity.²⁴ A discursive vision of public life enables rational civic debate about the classics to take place and thus forms a community of argument. Moreover, rational argument plays an integral role in identifying a consensus among different groups regarding how best to support human dignity and flourishing, and thus eventually leads to a community of interpretive evaluation.

Public theology advances a discursive vision of political community that depends not only on practices of reasoned argument but also on a dialogical notion of the person. As Francis Fiorenza contends, Christians are prepared to engage in

¹⁸ Tracy, “Theology, Critical Social Theory, and the Public Realm,” in *Habermas, Modernity, and Public Theology* (ed. Don S. Browning and Francis Schüssler Fiorenza; New York: Crossroad, 1992) 19–42, at 19; see also 23, 41.

¹⁹ Tracy, “Particular Classics, Public Religion, and the American Tradition,” in Lovin, *Religion and American Public Life*, 115–31, esp. 121–22.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 118–19, see also 121–23.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 118–20.

²² See Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination* 99–154; “Particular Classics” 119–20, 123–25, and “Afterword: Theology, Public Discourse, and the American Tradition,” in *Religion and Twentieth-Century American Intellectual Life* (ed. Michael J. Lacey; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 193–203, esp. 196–99.

²³ According to Tracy, religious classics address widely shared human questions or “limit-questions” that all reasonable and reflective persons ask about human life. *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) 91–118; also “Afterword,” in Lacey, *Religion and Twentieth-Century American Intellectual Life*, 196–97.

²⁴ Tracy, “Particular Classics,” 123, and “Afterword,” 199–200. Reasoned argument directs a hermeneutic of suspicion at all “classical” answers to common human questions, and thus warrants a community of inquiry to interpret and debate them. *Ibid.* 125; and *The Analogical Imagination*, 66–70.

public discourse not only because they are socialized in political life with rhetorical norms and procedures of rational civic debate, as described by Tracy. Rather, the church itself already constitutes a community of shared inquiry and debate, what Fiorenza calls “a community of interpretation,” that deliberates morality, justice, and the good life from Christian perspectives.²⁵ The church expresses and embodies a community of inquiry that equips people with certain conversational practices required for participating in U.S. democratic debate. Actively deliberating among alternative visions of *religious* life is preparation for actively deliberating among alternative visions of *public* life.

Inquiry and debate in the church, according to Fiorenza, are consonant with dialogical practices of democratic debate in U.S. public life. Reasoned argument is also a centerpiece of some theologies of the human person within public theology, such that becoming more fully human takes place by participating in public/political debate rather than by withdrawing from it. Forming persons with virtues for public life and for its civic debate is central to the public theology of Ronald Thiemann. Public theology for Thiemann involves an “experiment in constructing a pluralistic society from the many particular communities that constitute our national identity.”²⁶ Thiemann argues not only that democratic debate supports a pluralistic society but also that such debate serves as the basis of public life and depends on a virtuous citizenry. Democratic debate upholds such virtues as freedom, equality, mutual respect, and justice, which in turn contributes to a common life that reflects similar virtues and values.²⁷ Thus, debate shapes a pluralistic political community with such virtues; it also cultivates and reinforces such moral virtues in its citizenry so that they are prepared for political engagement. Rather than lament the absence of theology or theological virtues in a pluralistic society, Thiemann holds that religious—alongside civic—traditions play important roles in shaping and socializing persons with such dialogical virtues necessary for public engagement.²⁸ Thiemann proposes that religious traditions²⁹ “school” their members in

²⁵ Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, “The Church as a Community of Interpretation: Political Theology between Discourse Ethics and Hermeneutical Reconstruction,” in Browning and Fiorenza, *Habermas, Modernity, and Public Theology*, 66–91, esp. 85.

²⁶ Ronald F. Thiemann, *Religion in Public Life: A Dilemma for Democracy* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1996) 172.

²⁷ Thiemann, “Public Theology: The Moral Dimension of Religion in a Pluralistic Society,” *Zeitschrift für Evangelische Ethik* 42 (1998) 176–90. See also Thiemann, “Public Religion: Bane or Blessing for Democracy?” in *Obligations of Citizenship and Demands of Faith: Religious Accommodation in Pluralist Democracies* (ed. Nancy L. Rosenblum; Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000) 73–89.

²⁸ One goal of public theology is to “identify the particular places where Christian convictions intersect with the practices that characterize contemporary public life,” which in this case involves moral formation. See Thiemann, *Constructing a Public Theology: The Church in a Pluralistic Culture* (Louisville: Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991) 21–22.

²⁹ Alasdair MacIntyre defines tradition as “an historically extended, socially embodied argument.” MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981) 207, quoted in Thiemann, *Constructing a Public Theology*, 134–35.

certain virtues³⁰ for a descriptive, nonfoundational theology that in turn enables the formation of good citizens, or a “civic-minded, public-spirited citizenry.”³¹ In other words, a nonfoundational approach to theology—which rejects the notion of a transhistorical essence of Christianity and instead stresses an ongoing revision of a living, historically, and culturally contextualized religious tradition³²—fosters and cultivates certain virtues (such as freedom, equality, tolerance, public accessibility, mutual respect, risk, and vulnerability) that characterize public life and are crucial for public engagement.³³

Religious traditions resonate with political practices (Fiorenza) and virtues (Thiemann) required for engaging in public life, so long as public life is construed discursively. Jeffrey Stout proposes a similar argument about the impact of civic political traditions on shaping persons with virtues for public life.³⁴ As Stout observes, the social practice of communicative reason—of giving and exchanging widely accessible arguments, justifications, and the like in democratic debate—shapes an idea of the common good that is grounded in and grows out of our discursive responsibilities to one another. By engaging in a deliberative debate that follows shared rhetorical norms and procedures for rational argument, we participate in a tradition of practical wisdom that in turn socializes our society and our very selves with a set of democratic virtues. A list of such conversational virtues drawn from Stout’s reflections include: responsibility, imagination, piety, charity, equality, respect, civility, accessibility, listening, justice, temperance, wisdom, speaking candidly, poise, ad hoc responses, humility, generosity, hope, courage, luck, and—interestingly—alienation. This notion of the virtuous citizen reveals a dialogical understanding of the person, which serves as a prerequisite for and a product of participation in public life.

In sum, these predominating figures in U.S. public theology advance a discursive vision of public life that rests on practices of rational argument, especially its attendant rhetorical norms and virtues, in order to cultivate conversation; conversation can in turn lead to a community, a public, based on a shared practice of debate and a growing consensus about issues within that debate. A discursive vision of public life does not reduce to political procedures for rational discourse; rather, it shapes morally principled political and, as it turns out, religious agents. As we have seen, participation in a tradition—whether a religious tradition for Thiemann or a political tradition for Stout—acts like a stepping stone to becoming a good citizen.

³⁰ See Thiemann, *Constructing a Public Theology*, 29–43, regarding churches as “schools of public virtue.”

³¹ *Ibid.*, 43.

³² *Ibid.*, 133–36.

³³ For a discussion of such civic virtues, see Thiemann, *Religion in Public Life*, 85–90, 113–14, 135–41.

³⁴ Jeffrey L. Stout, *Democracy and Tradition: Religion, Ethics, and Public Philosophy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004).

On my reading, a discursive vision of public life and its associated practices and virtues of deliberative debate stake out a legitimate place for religion in U.S. public life; it also enables the insights of particular religions to shape these debates and perhaps our very conceptions of public life. Rather than consider religion an interloper in political life or a sectarian stumbling block to civic debate,³⁵ our public theologians encourage the presence of religion in a vibrant political life and debate about the shape and form of a good society. Although public theology may justify a place for religion in the U.S. political context, can religion actually accomplish all the theological and formative work on public life and on persons that these theologians suggest?

■ Some Common and Emerging Criticisms of Public Theology

Critics tend to lament the absence of theology from public theology. Public theology is often said to undermine or undercut rather than support theological reflection, especially when religious claims are translated into a more widely available civic discourse.³⁶ Public theologians advance a discursive vision of public life that may focus on and follow shared rhetorical practices and virtues of rational argument at the expense of making more substantive theological claims.³⁷ This criticism suggests that theological claims are argued on the basis of publicly shared criteria, practices, and virtues of rational debate, and not on the basis of theological warrants. So when theology goes public, it may sacrifice its integrity for the sake of public intelligibility.

We can think with our public theologians to show that this common allegation—of an a-theology or absence of theology in public theology—is somewhat misguided. As already demonstrated, Tracy suggests that public theology discusses and disputes the “effects” of religious traditions, for example, the classic texts pro-

³⁵ Religious claims are often considered a significant stumbling block to public debate because they express private, confessional convictions in absolutist (i.e., nonnegotiable) terms, not often intelligible to a broader audience beyond a confessing community. Religious claims imply a confessional language, which may safeguard the integrity of religious claims, but may also exclude rather than appeal to a broader audience. See Robin Lovin, “Social Contract or a Public Covenant?” in *Religion and American Public Life*, 132–45. Moreover, religious (i.e., confessional) speech may not allow for further conversation because religious claims are stated absolutely, not persuasively. Thus, religious speech is often regarded as a “conversation stopper.” Richard Rorty, “Religion as Conversation Stopper,” in *Philosophy and Social Hope* (New York: Penguin, 2000) 168–74.

³⁶ A common form of this criticism is that public theology translates Christian theological symbols, claims, and language into more accessible terms, thereby compromising their theological integrity and possibly reducing theology to politics. See William Lindsey, “Public Theology as Civil Discourse: What Are We Talking About?” *Horizons* 19 (1992) 44–69; Michael J. Baxter, “The Non-Catholic Character of the ‘Public Church,’ ” *Modern Theology* 11 (April 1995) 243–58; and William T. Cavanaugh, “Is Public Theology Really Public? Some Problems with Civil Society,” *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* 21 (2001) 105–23.

³⁷ Philip Ziegler contends that theological reflection about God, especially about divine identity and agency, is largely absent from public theologies; see “God and Some Recent Public Theologies,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 4 (2002) 137–55.

duced by a religious tradition. These classic texts do contain rather specific (and at times conflicting) theological claims about the meaning, purpose, and flourishing of human life. Similarly, Kathryn Tanner contends that public theology examines and evaluates the socially and politically significant “conclusions” of religious claims for human dignity and flourishing.³⁸ Focusing on the public/political “effects” or “conclusions” of religious claims for their critical, practical, and transformative implications for public life does not assess the religious bases of such claims (and does not require a priori agreement with such claims), but does not altogether occlude their theological dimensions. Theology is not necessarily sidestepped or overlooked, especially if we take seriously the term “public” in public theology and treat the effects or conclusions of theological reflection in terms of their contribution to a more transformative vision of public life.

Emerging criticisms of public theology, as I understand them, focus on its political idealism about equal access to public life and discourse and its moral perfectionism about adequate formation for public life and discourse. In regard to its political idealism, feminist theologians point out that public theologians tend to assume full political participation in public life and its practices of rational civic discourse, and thus do not deal adequately with the possibilities and actualities of exclusion from public life, i.e., from political voice, access, representation, and power to effect change. Feminist theologians identify and challenge existing ideologies within a deliberative model of democracy, ideologies that shape and promote an alienating, at times exclusionary, public life. As feminist theologian and political theorist Rebecca Chopp explains, a so-called “narrative identity” shapes our “fundamental assumptions” about who constitutes and contributes to U.S. political life, and in so doing provides “a means of social and public cohesion” that trades on exclusion rather than full participation.³⁹ Contemporary political life still mainly privileges an ideal patriarchal subject, effectively alienating women and all so-called “others” from the U.S. body politic who do not fit its gendered, raced, and classed narrative constructions of political subjectivity and agency.⁴⁰ By exposing an entrenched patriarchy within U.S. public life, feminist theologians cannot easily follow what I see as the turn to the virtuous political subject in some public theologies. When a patriarchal norm of political subjectivity⁴¹ underlies and

³⁸ Kathryn Tanner, “Public Theology and the Character of Public Debate,” *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* (1996) 79–101, esp. 87–91, 94–96.

³⁹ Rebecca S. Chopp, “Reimagining Public Discourse,” in *Black Faith and Public Talk: Critical Essays on James H. Cone’s Black Theology and Black Power* (ed. Dwight N. Hopkins; Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1999) 150–64, at 152.

⁴⁰ Chopp, “A Feminist Perspective: Christianity, Democracy, and Feminist Theology,” in *Christianity and Democracy in a Global Context* (ed. John Witte, Jr.; Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1993) 111–29, at 126.

⁴¹ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon, 1992) ch. 4. *Patriarchy* is an analytical concept that helps feminist theology to examine and problematize the social construction of women’s and some men’s marginal, subordinate status. It does not suggest a social system of universal male dominance, but rather refers

remains largely unmasked in democratic discourse and practice, U.S. public theology runs the risk of not contesting prevailing narratives of political subjectivity that relegate women and all “others” to second-class citizenship in the body politic.⁴²

Such patriarchal constructions of political subjectivity, along with other forms of alienation and exclusion from public life, carry grave political and theological consequences regarding our very humanity. As womanist theologian M. Shawn Copeland observes, disempowered citizens who *cannot* and *do not* play participatory roles in political life cannot realize their full humanity, either personally or socially. Moreover, the denial of full political participation damages and perhaps undermines the common good, the totality of conditions that enable greater human fulfillment and flourishing.⁴³ Thus, a denial of full political participation amounts to a denial of full humanity, if we follow a theology of the person drawn from Vatican II which states that human beings are created in and for sociality, for interdependent and intersubjective relations in all dimensions of human life—personal, familial, socio-political, cultural, national, and international.⁴⁴

to the multiplicative interconnections between gender, race, class, and culture that legitimate and justify a complex system of hierarchical relations, as well as ultimately idealize an elite, white, male, Western paradigm of personhood. It refers to a multi-layered, complex system of dominance, which Schüssler Fiorenza renames *kyriarchy* (rule of the master or lord), in order to avoid any misinterpretation of patriarchy (rule of the father) that accounts only for women’s struggles with sexism and with hierarchical gender dualism. *Kyriarchy* helps highlight “the multiplicative interstructuring of the pyramidal hierarchical structures of ruling which affect women in different social locations differently” (ibid., 115). *Kyriarchy* stresses what feminists theorists and theologians intend by the more commonly used term *patriarchy*—that men and women are relatively advantaged and marginalized in different socio-historical contexts through related and mutually reinforcing interconnections between gender, race, class, culture, religion, sexual identity, and other markers of social identity (Ibid., 123).

⁴² Schüssler Fiorenza, *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ekklesia-logy of Liberation* (New York: Crossroad, 1993) 332–52, 353–72. I will further analyze this point in the next section. Schüssler Fiorenza’s concept of the *ekklesia* of wo/men helps to disclose that classical and contemporary democracy put up substantial roadblocks to political voice, access, and representation, in part due to patriarchal norms of political subjectivity. See also the article by Letty M. Russell in this issue regarding “othering” in U.S. politics.

⁴³ Modern (and postmodern) society can be alienated from classical and Christian notions of the common good. According to M. Shawn Copeland, modern public/political life operates contractually and aims for mutual advantage rather than interdependent relations that are oriented to mutual fulfillment, it tends to emphasize legislation as a basis for socio-political life rather than the cultivation of moral character and virtue, and it prioritizes individual self-interest rather than relational obligations. “Reconsidering the Idea of the Common Good,” in *Catholic Social Thought and the New World Order* (ed. Oliver F. Williams and John W. Houck; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993) 309–23, esp. 309–16, 322–23.

⁴⁴ “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: *Gaudium et Spes*, 7 December 1965,” in *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents* (ed. Austin Flannery, O.P.; Northport, N.Y.: Costello Publishing Co., 1996) 163–282, esp. pars. 24–25, 46. Fragmentation in and from public life infringes on full human dignity in all dimensions of life—personal, socio-political, and even religious; a disenfranchised citizen cannot actualize his or her God-given dignity and cannot effectively promote wider human well-being (*Gaudium et Spes*, pars. 73–75).

In regard to its moral perfectionism, feminist theologians raise questions about the ability of political and religious institutions to shape persons with conversational or dialogical virtues for public engagement via argument, as suggested by our public theologians. The Catholic Church in contemporary U.S. public life may not enjoy a wide hearing as a moral and socio-political critic of U.S. society. Since 2001, the Catholic Church damaged its public credibility during the priest pedophilia and sexual abuse scandals that had their epicenter in the Archdiocese of Boston. Also, there is a growing tension between the Catholic Church's public advocacy and its governance of everyday pastoral life. The increasing control of pastoral and academic theological discourse (through litmus tests for ascertaining religious orthodoxy, the frequent silencing of theologians, and more recently the requirement that professors at Catholic colleges who teach Catholic theology receive a *mandatum* from their local bishop) may undermine the vitality and credibility of the Catholic Church's public discourse.⁴⁵ Moreover, its public discourse about human rights, especially the right to political participation, appears incongruent with its own institutional structures that lead to a less-than-fully inclusive and participatory church.⁴⁶ Finally, the magisterium and leading bishops increasingly discourage a healthy deliberative debate about religious traditions, e.g., the nonnegotiable moral guidelines (and penalties) for Catholic voters and political candidates during the 2004 U.S. presidential election.⁴⁷ According to Margaret Farley, such limited and limiting religio-political engagement not only de-centers the Church's long-standing teachings and advocacy for social justice but also is liable to divide rather than bridge different groups—thereby contradicting public theology's basic orientation toward consensus-building.⁴⁸ These few poignant examples show that a lack of

⁴⁵ Margaret Farley, "The Church in the Public Forum," 94–98.

⁴⁶ Mary E. Hines, "Ecclesiology for a Public Church," *CTSA Proceedings of the Fifty-Fifth Annual Convention* 55 (2000) 23–46, at 25–26, 40. If the goal of a discursive vision of public life is to build community through argument, interpretation, and eventual consensus, then the Catholic Church's own structures and processes should (but often do not) reflect an ability to achieve a (con)sensus *fidei*, or a general agreement among "the body of the faithful," which includes both the magisterium and the laity (*ibid.*, 38–39). For a further theological explication of the *sensus fidelium*, see Richard R. Gaillardetz, *By What Authority? A Primer on Scripture, the Magisterium, and the Sense of the Faithful* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2003).

⁴⁷ Bishop Michael J. Sheridan, "A Pastoral Letter to the Catholic Faithful of the Diocese of Colorado Springs on the Duties of Catholic Politicians and Voters," May 1, 2004; available at <http://www.gwu.edu/~action/2004/interestg/cath050104ltr.html>. Bishop Sheridan argued that Catholic candidates and voters who support abortion, stem cell research, euthanasia, and same-sex marriage should be excluded from communion until they alter their views and receive the sacrament of reconciliation. Bishop Sheridan's argument appeared to be backed by an official Vatican statement that some moral issues (abortion, euthanasia) are beyond debate while social justice issues (war, death penalty) should generate broad debate in the Catholic Church. See the confidential letter of then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, to Cardinal Theodore McCarrick and Bishop Wilton Gregory, "Worthiness to Receive Holy Communion," June/July 2004, esp. par. 3 (available at <http://www.priestsforlife.org/magisterium/bishops/04-07ratzingerommunion.htm>).

⁴⁸ Farley, "The Church in the Public Forum," esp. 90, 94–95.

deliberative debate within religious traditions may result in a lack of preparedness for public life and engagement; the church, especially according to Catholic magisterial and pastoral teachings, may not participate in shaping and forming the kind of critically participatory citizens that some public theologians propose.

To summarize these criticisms, public theology may take for granted both access to public discourse and the inculcation of practices and virtues for public life in the face of an actual and long-standing lack of access to public life as well as political power and, potentially, a deeply troubling lack of adequate formation for public/political engagement. How can feminist theology help address these common and emerging criticisms and thereby further advance the theological project of public theology? Taking the feminist theological category of the *ekklesia* of wo/men as a starting point, I propose and argue for a feminist reconceptualization of U.S. public life and its associated practices as well as its virtues of public engagement. To articulate a new feminist approach to public theology on the theological grounds of the *ekklesia* of wo/men, I will utilize feminist theology to wrestle with and respond to the criticism that U.S. public theology is not sufficiently theological, as well as begin to critically reconstruct its vision, practices, and virtues of public life to reflect theological values of justice, equality, and full participation.

■ Reclaiming *Ekklesia*, Constructing A Feminist Public Theology

Since the early 1980s, feminist New Testament scholar and theologian Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has introduced and elaborated on a central theological concept, the *ekklesia* of wo/men.⁴⁹ According to Schüssler Fiorenza, *ekklesia* in its classical Greco-Roman and early Christian contexts referred to “the political decision-making congress or assembly of full citizens” and suggested, at least in principle, a radical (i.e., grassroots, or popular) democracy, in which all citizens enjoy equal rights to full participation.⁵⁰ The *ekklesia* of wo/men functions for Schüssler Fiorenza as a critical concept for analyzing patriarchal aspects of politics and religion and for pinpointing incongruities between egalitarian ideals and exclusionary practices in both political and religious life. With regard to politics, *ekklesia* when combined with *wo/men* helps to crystallize and challenge the tensions and outright contradictions between egalitarian political discourses and actual ideological political practices that

⁴⁹ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983); *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon, 1984); “The Will to Choose or to Reject,” in *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (ed. Letty M. Russell; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985) 126–36; *But She Said*; and *Discipleship of Equals*.

⁵⁰ Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 128; see also 5, 118. Other scholars recover a public/political dimension of being church by connecting *ekklesia* (or assembly) with the assembly of the Israelites on Mt. Sinai, and not with Greco-Roman political theory. See Gerhard Lohfink, *Does God Need the Church? Toward a Theology of the People of God* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1999), as cited in Cavanaugh, “Is Public Theology Really Public?” 117.

largely entitled only certain elite men and women to full citizenship.⁵¹ With regard to religion, *ekklesia* when combined with *wo/men* highlights the inconsistencies between egalitarian ideals and exclusionary practices in early and contemporary Christian communities. According to very early Christian claims about baptism, all people regardless of gender, race, class, or religion could become disciples of Jesus by entering voluntarily into the “discipleship of equals,” an egalitarian community unified in Christ and described in some New Testament texts such as Gal 3:26–28.⁵² However, early and more contemporary Christian communities adapted to and reinforced patriarchal socio-political structures and cultures of their times, thereby effacing women’s roles in the church, especially leadership roles.⁵³ In sum, the *ekklesia* of *wo/men* signifies discursively “that neither the church nor society are what they claim to be: *ekklesia*, a democratic congress of self-governing citizens” that includes all people, especially women.⁵⁴

On my reading, the *ekklesia* of *wo/men* helps to criticize patriarchal aspects of religious and political life for marginalizing women and some men from discipleship and citizenship. It also advances a constructive alternative vision of religious and political life for women and for all people. When combined with *wo/men*, *ekklesia* offers a radically inclusive, egalitarian, and participatory vision of religious and political life. It illuminates and celebrates women’s theological right to be the church⁵⁵ as well as their legal right to full political participation—but not to the exclusion of men. As further articulated by Schüssler Fiorenza, the *ekklesia* of *wo/men* refers to “a feminist movement of self-identified women and women-identified men” (i.e., men in solidarity with women) struggling for its emancipatory vision of religious and political life in a patriarchal world, especially for marginalized women and men.⁵⁶ To resist any misinterpretations of the *ekklesia* of *wo/men* as an essentialist or separatist religio-political space of, for, and by women, Schüssler Fiorenza inserts a slash in the middle of *wo/men*, which is an effective linguistic strategy to underscore the integrity, equality, and solidarity of women and men in her vision of a more just religious and political life.⁵⁷

In contemporary U.S. feminist theology, the *ekklesia* of *wo/men* carries multiple theological meanings, but is most often marshaled to support feminist biblical inter-

⁵¹ Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 115–22.

⁵² Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 343–51; see also *Sharing Her Word* (Boston: Beacon, 1998), 112–21.

⁵³ Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 315–33; see also *Discipleship of Equals*, 213–31. This is not simply a contrast between a communal model of the church and an institutional model of church, but rather an early and ongoing competition between different understandings of authority.

⁵⁴ Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 128.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 127, and “For Women in Men’s World,” in *The Power of Naming* (ed. Schüssler Fiorenza; Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1996) 3–13, at 9–10.

⁵⁶ Schüssler Fiorenza, “For Women in Men’s World,” 10.

⁵⁷ Schüssler Fiorenza, *Sharing Her Word*, 131–36.

pretation⁵⁸ and feminist ritual practice.⁵⁹ Imagining and actualizing the *ekklesia* of wo/men as an alternate religious reality already has a firm theological basis in the notion of the discipleship of equals.⁶⁰ I will focus on imagining and actualizing the *ekklesia* of wo/men as an alternative political reality, exploring and further developing this concept in order to construct a feminist public theology. More specifically, I am interested in reclaiming and extending a unique and as-yet-untapped political meaning of the *ekklesia* of wo/men⁶¹ in order to develop a theological vision of the U.S. political order and to identify practices as well as virtues of socio-political engagement. As we will see, building on and extending Schüssler Fiorenza's category of the *ekklesia* of wo/men holds much promise for the articulation of a new feminist approach to U.S. public theology.

When redefined from a feminist perspective that is grounded in the *ekklesia* of wo/men, public theology can reshape our vision of political community; it can also further specify some practices and civic virtues that actively contribute to realizing that vision. What vision of the public/political order does the *ekklesia* of wo/men suggest? Which practices and public virtues will instantiate that vision of the political order? It serves, as Schüssler Fiorenza contends, as an alternative space to a predominantly patriarchal political order, a space that "is at once an historical and an imagined reality, already partially realized but still to be struggled for."⁶² Thus, it affords *both* an imagined ideal alternative vision of a just, egalitarian, and participatory political community, *and* an activist site of the struggles and work to realize that vision. In other words, the *ekklesia* of wo/men consists of *both* a theological

⁵⁸ Interpreting biblical texts involves the criticism of Christian texts that were generated in (and that still continue to justify) a patriarchal religious and political order, as well as the (re)construction of Christian texts to better account for women's significant contributions to Christian history and theology. In more recent feminist hermeneutics, feminist biblical interpretation consists of at least five steps (Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 52–76).

⁵⁹ Scholarly and ritual resources about women-church include Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Women-Church* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985); idem, "Women Church: An American Catholic Feminist Movement," in *What's Left?* (ed. Mary Jo Weaver; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999) 46–64; Marjorie Procter-Smith, "Feminist Ritual Strategies," in *Toward a New Heaven and a New Earth* (ed. Fernando F. Segovia; Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2003) 498–515; *Women at Worship* (ed. Marjorie Procter-Smith and Janet Walton; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993); and *Dissident Daughters: Feminist Liturgies in Global Context* (ed. Teresa Berger; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2001). For a critical response to some aspects of the women-church movement, see Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 125–28.

⁶⁰ For example, Mary E. Hines, "Community for Liberation: Church," in *Freeing Theology: The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective* (ed. Catherine Mowry LaCugna; New York: Harper-Collins, 1993) 161–84; Mary E. Hunt, "Feminist Catholic Theology and Practice: From Kyriarchy to Discipleship of Equals," in Segovia, *Toward a New Heaven and a New Earth*, 459–72.

⁶¹ Schüssler Fiorenza is regarded by some theologians as a public intellectual, but her theological categories have yet to be analyzed for their political meanings; my essay contributes to such an analysis. See Ronald F. Thiemann, "Faith and the Public Intellectual," in *Walk in the Ways of Wisdom: Essays in Honor of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza* (ed. Shelly Matthews, Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, and Melanie Johnson-DeBaufre; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2003) 88–105.

⁶² Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 130.

vision of public life *and* a practice of public engagement (in this case, struggle) to begin to bring about that vision. Further theological reflection on the eschatological *telos* or end goal of this world as well as on the means for bringing about that end goal helps to better elucidate the *ekklesia* of wo/men and its theological vision of political community as well as its practice of political engagement.

As an end, the *ekklesia* of wo/men—which stands as a theological shorthand for a just, egalitarian, and fully participatory political community—provides a theological source of eschatological hope for imagining and seeking to realize an alternative political life. It exemplifies, as stated in the above quote, an eschatological tension between the “already” and the “not yet”—an ideal political vision that is already underway but not yet fully realized or actualized politically.⁶³ It points to an eschatological *telos* or end for public life, and thus illustrates a fundamental orientation to the future in most feminist theology.⁶⁴ The *ekklesia* of wo/men expresses both a future and a partially present reality; it functions as both an “imagined community” of solidarity and as “a site of feminist struggles” to usher in the religious, political, and social transformations necessary to achieve such solidarity.⁶⁵ It characterizes *both* an imagined alternative (i.e., ideal future or eschatological) vision of a more just, egalitarian, participatory political life *and* the contemporary struggles against patriarchal political life in order to realize that vision.⁶⁶ As a means, similar to what sociologists and historians would call mediating structures,⁶⁷ the *ekklesia* of

⁶³ Ibid., 5–6, 130. Elizabeth Castelli has shown that this “already” and “not yet” quality of the *ekklesia* of wo/men resonates with feminist utopian theory. “The *Ekklesia* of Wo/men and/as Utopian Space,” in *On the Cutting Edge* (ed. Jane Schaberg, Alice Bach, and Esther Fuchs; New York: Continuum, 2004) 36–52. But this “already” and “not yet” quality—this idealized but not fully actualized vision of just, participatory, egalitarian political life—places the *ekklesia* of wo/men in the context of Christian eschatology. My argument is that the *ekklesia* of wo/men resonates with Christian eschatology, and that Christian eschatology can play a vital but not escapist, romantic role in more progressive theologies of public/political engagement. The *ekklesia* of wo/men does express a political realism regarding an inability of human beings to fully actualize an ideal political order, but it nevertheless does not lead to despair about this inability. Rather, as I further constructively develop this concept in this essay, the *ekklesia* of wo/men can propel struggles and political practices to realize, if only in part, an alternative ideal future vision of the political order.

⁶⁴ Serene Jones argues that feminist theology is fundamentally eschatological because it consists of an imaginative and lived kind of religious reflection and action that is oriented to an alternative possible future for human life beyond patriarchy. *Feminist Theory and Christian Theology: Cartographies of Grace* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000) 1–10, 51–55. Letty Russell first proposed that feminist theology follow a methodology that thinks “from the other end,” i.e., from an eschatological *telos* of the world; see *Liberating Eschatology: Essays in Honor of Letty M. Russell* (ed. Margaret A. Farley and Serene Jones; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1999).

⁶⁵ Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 130.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Mediating structures stand or sit in between everyday persons and often impersonal political institutions, providing all sorts of metaphysical and social goods for shaping human life and meeting human needs; Peter L. Berger and Richard John Neuhaus, *To Empower People: The Role of Mediating Structures in Public Policy* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1977). My argument in this paragraph regarding the *ekklesia* of wo/men as a mediating

wo/men is an alternative feminist public that stands in between an emancipatory future political life and an existing patriarchal political life, providing all sorts of theological goods for promoting political engagement and for effecting socio-political change. Its alternative vision functions as a kind of theological yardstick that can judge our present political life and that can inspire political change; it advances a future vision which provides a theological basis to criticize as well as to begin transforming our present political life and arrangements.

The predominant figures in contemporary U.S. public theology examined in this essay foster a discursive vision of public life and an associated set of rhetorical practices of rational argument for engaging in civic debate. Likewise, actualizing the *ekklesia* of wo/men for Schüssler Fiorenza takes place in political life through the creation of “a feminist political alterity”⁶⁸ that centers on a rhetorical space and its practices of debate. Imagining and actualizing the *ekklesia* of wo/men as an alternate political reality to patriarchal politics allows marginated women and men to more fully enter into and help reshape our existing political life.⁶⁹ As Schüssler Fiorenza argues, the *ekklesia* of wo/men is critically appropriated from ancient Greco-Roman notions of the *ekklesia*, in which citizens “came together to deliberate and decide the best course of action for pursuing their own well-being and securing the welfare of the polis.”⁷⁰ Such a rhetorical space admits and affirms multiple voices, encourages debate about an alternate political reality, and fosters equality and solidarity among wo/men’s religio-political struggles in order to bring about that alternate emancipatory reality. Schüssler Fiorenza lists the rhetorical practices of the *ekklesia* of wo/men as a rhetorics of liberation (demystifying patriarchy/kyriarchy), of differences (affirming multiple voices/perspectives), of equality (egalitarian process), and of vision (investigating religious resources that foster such equality).⁷¹ Seeking more than gaining access to public debate and more than adding women’s voices to existing patriarchal politics, the *ekklesia* of wo/men marks out a rhetorical counterspace or counterpublic and a set of distinctive practices so that a different political reality might be imagined, debated, and at least partly constructed.

structure parallels what Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham claims about the Black church in African American women’s movements in the early twentieth century U.S.; see Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women’s Movement in the Black Baptist Church: 1880–1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993) 7–13.

⁶⁸ Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 130.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 118, 130–32; see also *Discipleship of Equals*, 348–52, 368–72.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 131–132. She later redefines a rhetorics of liberation as conscientization, a term drawn from Brazilian educator Paulo Freire which means raising awareness regarding oppression, in this case political and religious forms of patriarchy/kyriarchy. She continues to explore feminist strategies of biblical interpretation as a primary means to foster such awareness and other rhetorical practices; Schüssler Fiorenza, *Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2001) 93–98, 151–61.

The rhetorical public space and practices associated with the *ekklesia* of wo/men differ markedly from a discursive vision of public life and its rhetorical practices that predominate in our still largely patriarchal U.S. public life. In the *ekklesia* of wo/men, the point of a diversity of voices engaged in debate is *both* to challenge a prevailing patriarchal political status quo that stands against such diversity, debate, solidarity, and liberation, *and* to enable the reshaping of political norms and practices for the purpose of achieving solidarity and perhaps liberation. A feminist public theology seeks not to incorporate some marginalized women and men into an existing patriarchal body politic but to contest and change that body politic itself. In other words, a feminist rhetorical space and its practices accent solidarity and socio-political change rather than consensus. As we have seen, a discursive vision of public life with its rhetorical practices of reasoned argument is oriented to consensus; by contrast, a feminist public theology links its rhetorical space and practices of debate to solidarity, to building community among women's and men's struggles for political liberation and for broader political change. Seeking consensus may reinforce an oppressive political status quo;⁷² seeking solidarity and social change implies challenging any institutionalized inequity and exclusion in public life, and thereby generating a more inclusive, participatory, and just political community.

Extending the *ekklesia* of wo/men as explained by Schüssler Fiorenza, I propose that a feminist public theology goes beyond redefining an existing discursive vision of public life and its rhetorical practices of public debate. It also enriches our understanding of civic virtues. Recall that for our public theologians explored earlier in this essay, religious and civic traditions socialize persons with certain dialogical virtues for public engagement, virtues such as intelligibility, integrity, freedom, equality, tolerance, mutual respect and reciprocity, risk, vulnerability. However, some public theologians go on to point out that democratic and religious traditions edge towards virtues for re-envisioning and reshaping public life itself. For example, Thiemann argues that religious traditions contain alternate views of the good society that can contest and transform our prevailing notions of freedom, equality, and tolerance.⁷³ Thiemann also observes that religious traditions instill compassion and care (for others, for the poor, for the common good)⁷⁴—virtues

⁷² Michael Baxter argues that U.S. public theology insufficiently criticizes the existing political order which often backs exclusionary, dehumanizing, and hegemonic forms of public life, and thereby provides, perhaps unwittingly, theological justifications of the state, or worse of empire. See Baxter, "Notes on Catholic Americanism and Catholic Radicalism: Toward a Counter-Tradition of Catholic Social Ethics," in *American Catholic Traditions: Resources for Renewal* (ed. Sandra Yocum Mize and William L. Portier; Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1997) 53–71, and "'Blowing the Dynamite of the Church': Catholic Radicalism from a Catholic Radicalist Perspective," in *The Church as Counterculture* (ed. Michael L. Budde and Robert W. Brimlow; Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 2000) 195–212.

⁷³ Thiemann, *Religion in Public Life*, 86–90.

⁷⁴ Thiemann, *Constructing a Public Theology*, 43.

that are often absent in our existing public life. Similarly, a feminist public theology and its practices of debate foster civic virtues for public engagement, such as risk and openness. However, it goes further and instills a rich array of virtues for transforming public life, such as imagination, empowerment, and transformation.⁷⁵ Thus, rhetorical practices within a deliberative democracy carry moral meaning, but feminist rhetorical practices seek and instill virtues for engaging in, as well as re-envisioning, public life.

In sum, a feminist public theology defined as *ekklesial* work sheds new light on a theological vision of public life and practices as well as virtues of public engagement. This essay has attended to the insights of a feminist approach for rethinking U.S. public theology on its existing terms, especially its discursive vision of public life and its rhetorical practices and virtues of public engagement. A feminist public theology both reinforces and contests long-standing rhetorical practices and virtues of public engagement in U.S. public theology. It describes an alternative vision of public life against which to critically judge our existing patriarchal political life; it also prescribes rhetorical practices and public virtues for reconstructing our contemporary political life in order to bring about that vision. In other words, it consists of a guiding theological vision that imagines a more just, participatory political community, and that redefines rhetorical practices and virtues so as to begin to realize, if only in part, such a community. In my larger study of gender, religion and politics in the U.S. context, I propose that a feminist approach to public theology—which I am articulating as *ekklesial* work—can go beyond redefining a discursive vision of public life, its rhetorical practices of rational argument, and its civic virtues for engaging in democratic conversation: the notion of *ekklesial* work can open up theological space to illumine many practices of socio-political engagement, many examples of being and building up a just, reconciled socio-political order.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Schüssler Fiorenza, *Wisdom Ways*, 179. Given that my constructive proposal for a feminist public theology emphasizes eschatology, the virtue of hope—an intrahistorical but realistic hope—also figures prominently.

⁷⁶ My larger study distinguishes among (without overly reifying) what I am calling rhetorical, symbolic, and prophetic modes or practices of public engagement. My research has led me to attend to rhetorical, symbolic, and prophetic practices of public engagement that counter an oppressive political order and that simultaneously make space for an alternative and more transformative political community to take shape. In my view, rhetorical practices stress gaining a voice in public life, but also point toward ways of using voice to resist and re-imagine our current forms of public life. Symbolic practices entail rethinking and reconstructing theological symbols for their socio-political significance, i.e., their ability to challenge and perhaps change our conceptions of public life. Prophetic practices involve protest for the purpose of laying claim to public life in order to denounce it, as well as to announce a possible alternative political order. To clarify, these practices do not reconstitute political community as such, but disrupt, destabilize, and otherwise intervene in prevailing forms of political life in order to make space—perhaps an eschatological space—for the inbreaking of an alternative public life/political order which is more just and flourishing. On my reading, these practices are reflected in major figures of twentieth century U.S. Catholic social thought (e.g., Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, and Phillip Berrigan) as well as in contemporary

A feminist public theology can also significantly contribute to a better understanding of the roles and purposes of religion in U.S. public life. Redefining public theology as *ekklesial* work sharpens our focus on a central theological task of U.S. public theologies: to make (or create and sustain) a public, i.e., to apply religious resources so as to negotiate and eventually reconcile often disparate communities into an overarching community of multiple communities. *Ekklesial* work, with its emphasis on imagining and seeking to create such a political community, draws further attention to the significance of the term "public" in public theology. It illuminates the kind of political community imagined in public theologies, as well as their associated practices and virtues for sustaining that political community. Thus, *ekklesial* work breaks new ground in U.S. public theology, because it has less to do with introducing religious claims into a multi-religious public square in a broadly intelligible way and more to do with the contributions of religion to making and re-making our conceptions of the public and of a more just, participatory political order. Thus, the *ekklesia* of wo/men can help theologians to rethink on theological grounds a shared but often unmentioned task among public theologies, i.e., to (re)envision and (re)make a public, a political community.

Let me stay on this point about providing a theological basis for public theology. A feminist approach allows us to take a fresh look at a central task among public theologies, namely to make a public, to build up and to be a reconciled body of multiple communities in the socio-political order. My notion of *ekklesial* work clarifies and deepens this task of public theology to create a more just, egalitarian, and participatory public life, and, in so doing, provides a substantive theological vision of that kind of public life. In giving a theological account of one major task of public theology, my notion of *ekklesial* work elaborates one possible response to dispel a common criticism about the absence of theology in public theology. Moreover, an emphasis on eschatology in describing that theological vision of public life brings to the foreground that our U.S. public life is not yet fully just, egalitarian, or participatory. The *ekklesia* of wo/men points to an ideal eschatological *telos* for public life and suggests a means, a set of practices of socio-political engagement, for bringing about that end in the present rather than postponing it to some otherworldly posthistorical future. Placing public theology in an eschatological context encourages rather than discourages public engagement; as the council fathers at Vatican II claim, "Far from diminishing our concern to develop this earth, the expectation of a new earth should spur us on, for it is here that the body of a new human family grows, foreshadowing in some way the age which is to come."⁷⁷ A feminist public theology supports, therefore, a kind of this-worldly

feminist, womanist, and *mujerista* theologies. As these figures are not usually considered in the discipline of U.S. public theology, my notion of *ekklesial* work holds the theological potential to widen the scope of what counts as public theology as well as to lend support to other modes of political engagement.

⁷⁷ *Gaudium et Spes*, par. 39.

eschatology.⁷⁸ Eschatology helps reframe the task of public theology, of doing ekklesial work—to actively hope in fostering (even if not completely achieving) a more emancipatory common life.

Finally, redefining U.S. public theology from a feminist theological perspective helps enhance the project of public theology in at least three ways. Ekklesial work reveals a long untapped political dimension of feminist theology, thus highlighting its potential contribution to public theology. Also, it redefines what I see as a central task of public theology—to convoke a public, a political community—in theological terms, by providing a substantive theological and eschatological vision (i.e., the *ekklesia* of wo/men) of such a public. Finally, ekklesial work provides a conceptual theological site for gaining a better understanding of critical and constructive religio-political engagement in U.S. public life, both its practices and its virtues.

■ Implications: The Locus of Theology, the Vocation of the Theologian

This essay has considered the *ekklesia* of wo/men to illuminate some contributions of feminist theology to public theology. What I am calling ekklesial work has revealed a new way of doing public theology that is attuned to a theological vision of U.S. public life and a new understanding of rhetorical practices and virtues for engaging in as well as transforming that life. I want to conclude with some reflections on the implications of a feminist public theology for doing theology itself. Ekklesial work, as elaborated in this essay, advances a main task of public theology—to convoke or make a political community, a task that impacts the locus of contemporary theology and the vocation of contemporary theologians.

Ekklesial work offers a new perspective on a central convocative task of public theology, which in turn expresses anew the locus or site of theological reflection. As I argued in this essay, when the term “public” takes center stage in defining public theology, public theology entails the active work of creating a just community of different and at times disparate communities that identify and shape our identities and our society. Community is both given and made; we become more fully human in the midst of multiple communities and in actively seeking to transform those communities. Thus, public theology challenges a prevailing understanding of church and world as two discrete and distinct spheres of life, and instead considers them as

⁷⁸ An emphasis on a this-worldly or realized eschatology counters a twofold feminist theological critique of Christian hope as repressive and as a denial of human finitude. An other-worldly hope in an absolute future, i.e., in an afterlife, can postpone a pragmatic hope in actually changing our real historical future. Moreover, hope in an ultimate afterlife, modeled on the personal death and resurrection of Jesus, may downplay our very earthly lives and may obscure the responsibilities and obligations that we owe one another and the earth. See Margaret Farley, “Feminism and Hope,” in *Full of Hope: Critical Social Perspectives on Theology* (ed. Magdala Thompson; New York: Paulist Press, 2003) 20–40, esp. 25–27.

rightly autonomous but mutually critical and interrelated. In this communal context, ekklesial work refers primarily to a theology that is located in between multiple groups for the purpose of weaving those groups together into a more just, more comprehensive tapestry of common life. Ekklesial work, which characterizes my feminist approach to public theology and its convocative task, highlights the mediatorial role that theologians increasingly play in bridging multiple groups defined by church, academy, and society, and also by race, class, gender, culture, religion, sexuality, and other markers of identity. Thus, the locus of theological reflection inspired by my notion of ekklesial work is more than simply situated between church and world; it is found in and among multiple communities of belonging that are already ingredient in and that deeply intersect church and society.

Ekklesial work, or the practice of community-building in a feminist public theology, also suggests some signature features of the theologian's vocation, features that are perhaps best elucidated by an emerging feminist theological notion of interstitiality, of being in-between. The concept of interstitiality attends to *both* multiple communities of belonging that co-constitute our identities and our society *and* the act of sculpting a meaningful sense of self-unity among those communities.⁷⁹ To do public theology, to do ekklesial work, i.e., to imagine and actively participate in realizing a reconciled community of multiple communities, theologians occupy a middle space in between multiple communities. Thus, a theologian identifies not one but many communities of accountability: a feminist theologian might develop an ongoing dialogue among womanist, Black, Latino/a and other theologians in order to make strides toward overcoming identity politics in both theology and U.S. political life.⁸⁰ Moreover, doing ekklesial work, or imagining and instantiating an ideal eschatological vision of the *ekklesia*, of a just political community, takes place "in between" the times, expressed in theological terms as in between this world and the ever-coming fulfillment of the world, and in political terms as in between an existing patriarchal political order and a future, more egalitarian public life. Theologians are situated in an in-between space, between that ideal vision and those contemporary struggles to bring about that vision in what is a still very patriarchal present. When theologians are situated in between an oppressive, alienating public life and a future vision of a more just and reconciled public life, public theology entails a kind of hope-filled, eschatological work. Theologians then envision and seek to enfold, even if only in part, what we do not yet fully see, hear,

⁷⁹ See Rita Nakashima Brock, "Interstitial Integrity: Reflections Toward an Asian American Woman's Theology," in *Introduction to Christian Theology: Contemporary North American Perspectives* (ed. Roger A. Badham; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998) 183–96.

⁸⁰ Most contemporary U.S. theologians identify with a particular kind of theological reflection—for example, Black theology, Latino/a theology, feminist theology, or womanist theology. This is not to indicate or replicate an identity politics within theology, but rather to emphasize the communities with whom a theologian speaks and acts. What I am suggesting here is that ekklesial work prompts theologians to identify not one but many communities of accountability within which we live, move, and have our being, theologically and otherwise.

or know—a just, egalitarian, and participatory society. To summarize, situated in between multiple communities and in between present and future visions of public life, theologians see and seek to realize a common life that reflects a future communion for which we long with one another and with God. Thus, theologians actively engage in an eschatological hope for that kind of community and a praxis of being and building it. Such theologians, then, contribute to a theo-political praxis, that is, an intellectual and lived struggle, of creating an alternative political community that more clearly supports human fulfillment and flourishing.

Public theology in the U.S. context is often associated with major figures, such as Protestant theologians Reinhold and H. Richard Niebuhr, Catholic theologian John Courtney Murray, and the theologians explored in this essay. Contemporary theologians lament the loss of such singular charismatic figures in the U.S. public arena, especially in light of the recent death of liberal Protestant preacher William Sloane Coffin, Jr. However, Martin Marty urges caution about such laments: “But the world, the nation, and its religious agencies have moved on, and one cannot recreate the circumstances that made them credible and offered them a hearing. The better question, since issues as large as theirs are with us now, is: How do we, as a nation and in religious sectors, summon energies, inspiration, resources, will, and potential constituencies so new sets and types of leaders with new tactics and messages can emerge?”⁸¹ Building on Marty’s use of “we,” I would argue that the ability to do public theology is not restricted to solitary theologians or to single individuals. When recast as ekklesial work according to a feminist theological perspective, public theology is no longer a so-called “single man movement” and is not limited to the institutional church or to its representatives, but is open to groups, to churches, to all people⁸² that strive to shape their own lives and our U.S. common life so that all may lay claim to their citizenship rights and responsibilities. Ekklesial work illuminates what it means for persons, groups, and movements to go public—to participate in public life—and also what it means for them to be a public—to re-envision and reshape U.S. public/political life across an increasing diversity of communities.

⁸¹ Martin E. Marty, “Remembering William Sloane Coffin,” *Sightings*, April 17, 2006; see also Marty, “Under Many Influences,” *Sightings*, February 14, 2005. (*Sightings* is an online weekly column related to issues of religion and public life that is published by the Martin Marty Center at the University of Chicago Divinity School.) Charles E. Curran also turns away from such laments about a lack of theological giants and turns toward a new generation of theologians and theological methods; Curran, “Where Have All the Dominant Theologians Gone?” *National Catholic Reporter* 41 (February 4, 2005) 16.

⁸² As Mary Hines notes, the public role of the church often defaults to bishops and other “official ordained spokespersons,” which directly contrasts with the role of the laity in public life articulated by Vatican II. See Hines, “Ecclesiology for a Public Church,” 36–39.

Encountering the “Other” in a World of Difference and Danger

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Paul Tillich and I arrived at Harvard Divinity School in the fall of 1955. It is the 50th anniversary of Tillich’s inaugural year (1955–1956) as University Professor at Harvard University and my 50th anniversary as one of the first women students to attend the Harvard Divinity School. It is no accident that we came at the same time, for I chose to come to Harvard for my ministerial studies just so I could be part of its renewal, and study with professors such as Paul Tillich.

I had been working in the group ministry of the East Harlem Protestant Parish in New York City. In 1948 some graduates of Union Theological Seminary who began that interracial, interdenominational ministry were very much influenced by Paul Tillich’s lectures and by his first book published in English in that same year, *The Protestant Era*.¹ Having already begun my seventeen years of ministry in that parish I was far more interested in Tillich’s views of religious socialism and reformation of the church than his systematic theology lectures, although I attended them faithfully each week in the Semitic Museum lecture hall.

According to George W. Webber, one of the founders of the East Harlem Protestant Parish, three major ideas shaped the new inner city ministry: creating new forms of church in local store fronts, or places where people lived and work; working as a group ministry team where people shared their lives, income, and talents together in working for social justice against the problems of poverty, racism, classism and so much more that confronted people living in East Harlem.²

¹ Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era* (trans. James Luther Adams; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948; abridged ed., Phoenix Books, 1957).

² George W. Webber, *God’s Colony in Man’s World* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960) 19–21.

How did *The Protestant Era*, a collection of theological articles written by a German theologian reflecting on the chaos of the period before and during the second World War, relate to this American inner city context? In East Harlem the end of the Protestant Era as Tillich described it had already happened. Established Protestant churches had abandoned the area and followed their middle class congregations elsewhere. A gospel message that connected God's love to the concern for social justice and change was needed in the face of so many urban problems.

Coming from white, middle class backgrounds many of us in the group ministry were encountering "the other" in a world of difference and danger for the first time. We saw the need for new ways of living out the gospel if it were to come alive for those who had been abandoned by the church and by the city around them. We found ourselves with new questions from the perspective of the "other." We were no longer looking for a *gracious God* as in the time of the Reformation, or a *gracious neighbor* as in the era of capitalist expansion and industrialization, but for a *gracious stranger* in a world of alienation.³

In the last fifty years this reality of encounter with the "other" has become a universal problem as globalization and pluralism create a world that is "other." In facing this predicament I want to join Tillich and that group of women and men in East Harlem by continuing the search for new ways of understanding difference as a gift, and practicing hospitality as an act of justice.

■ A World That Is "Other"

A few years ago at a conference in Basel I was asked to lecture on the "other" in postcolonial perspective. I resisted the use of the term, "other," and instead spoke about postcolonial *subjects*.⁴ In my perspective there are no "others," for all are created by God and no one is an *other*. Yet, if we look at our postcolonial world we see a constant process going on of what I would call *othering*: social structures and interactions that divide the world into subjects and objects and often demean, disgrace or destroy the ones who are objects or *others*.

Process of othering

Paul Tillich is not the only one to have pointed this out. Nevertheless his book *The Protestant Era*, documents the results of the combination of the Protestant Reforma-

³ Horst Symanowski, *The Christian Witness in an Industrial Society* (trans. George H. Kehm; Westminster Press, 1964) 50. "Luther's question when he was in, and even after he had left, the monastery [was]: 'How can I find a gracious God?'. . . But another question does drive us around, unsettles us, agitates whole peoples, and forces us into anxiety and despair: 'How can I find a gracious neighbor?'" Quoted in *Christian Education in Mission*, Letty M. Russell (Westminster Press, 1967) 158 n. 11.

⁴ Letty M. Russell, "Postkoloniale Subjekte und eine feministische hermeneutik der Gastfreundschaft," in *Als Hatten Sie Uns Neu Erfunden. Beobachtungen zu Fremdheit und Geschlecht* (ed. Heike Walz, Christine Lienemann-Perrin, and Dordis Strahm; Luzern: Edition Exodus, 2003) 99–112.

tion and the Enlightenment in helping create the subject/object split in which those with the power to dominate—principally white, Euro-American males— name both nature and some human beings as “other.” In combination with the industrial revolution and the development of capitalism this led to the treatment of workers, as well as people in colonized nations, as “other”: disposable objects whose labor and resources are to be exploited.

Referring to what he calls the “*bourgeois principle*,” Tillich describes the effects of technology and capitalism in the modern world. The goal of this bourgeois principal or paradigm of social, religious and political society is what Tillich calls the “radical dissolution of the bonds of original, organic community life, the dissolution of the powers of origin into elements to be conquered rationally.”⁵

According to James Luther Adams, Tillich’s translator, editor, and Harvard colleague: “Science, religion, politics, art, the relations between classes—all have been drawn into the crucible of the [self-centered autonomy of the] bourgeois principle.”⁶

This othering works through the internalization of fear: fear of being other, or being seen as other; fear for one’s own identity and the need to conform to the dominant paradigm of those who fit in a culture.⁷ Those declared “other” because of their nationality, skin color, gender, sexual orientation, or any dissimilarity to the dominant political, economic, and social norm are forced to internalize this need to conform in order to avoid being *othered*. In the same way, those from dominant groups also internalize the norms so that they will fit in and refuse to associate with those who are different.

Misuse of difference

The actions of *othering* are very much tied up with the misuse of difference. As Audre Lorde has pointed out, differences in themselves are not the problem.

[I]t is not those differences between us that are separating us [she says]. It is rather our refusal to recognize those differences, and to examine the distortions which result from our misnaming them and their effects upon human behavior and expectation.⁸

There are a lot of reasons to be afraid of those who are different from ourselves; to fear the stranger knocking at our door, the person with a different religion, the worker taking our job in Mexico or Mozambique, or the terrorist waiting to destroy our city. Some of these fears are real and cautionary tales. But, at the same time, our

⁵James Luther Adams, “Tillich’s Concept of the Protestant Era,” in *The Protestant Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948) 273–316, at 281.

⁶*Ibid.*, 281–82.

⁷Kristen Leslie, “The Experience of Otherness from a Pastoral Counselling Perspective,” Yale Divinity School, 12 April 2006, unpublished lecture.

⁸Audre Lorde, “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference,” in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Trumansburg, N.Y.: Crossing Press, 1984) 114–23, at 115.

fears combine with our own insecurity and resentment, and hatred grows between different races, classes, genders, and sexual orientations. Right now, there is even no love lost between different political parties . . . even after George Lakoff's book has explained us to each other!⁹

Audre Lorde has given us a clue for dealing with differences by reminding us that the problem is that they are often distorted by social structures as a means of division and control. Difference becomes a tool of domination: a *master's tool*.¹⁰ Here I will just mention four ways we see this happening: using political and economic structures to marginalize; teaching oppressed people to emulate the oppressors; using identity politics to turn groups against each other; and condemning those who are of mixed race or culture.

Often it is the political structures of domination in a society that use divisions among groups to play them off against each other. Those with the political, economic and educational power use that power to create the norms for who should be included or excluded. Things they do not like about themselves they project onto those whom they have marginalized. Marginalized people in our cities and around the world, who are then called "lazy," "ignorant," "ugly" by the standards of the white dominant culture, begin to think of themselves this way.¹¹ Resistance to such divisions requires community action and campaigns for social change because it takes a community to make a change!

People in our churches are caught up in the way social structures divide and conquer them. Sometimes this leads to emulation of the oppressor in order to follow the models of success presented on TV or by churches using middle class white models of church life. This can be a way of developing a new identity rooted in one's own culture but able to cope with the dominant culture. However, it can also encourage people to believe that "living and acting like the master" and using the "masters' tools" to push others down is the best way out of their status as "different" or "other."

At other times resistance to dominant white norms has led to affirmation of people's own dignity and heritage in communities moving together for change as happened with the Civil Rights movement. Even here, however, the social, political, and economic pressures push people to create their own power through forms of identity politics which reinforce difference within and beyond their group by requiring conformity to one pattern of identity. Many of you know much better than I how the process of divide and conquer makes difference a permanent divide that justifies all manner of "bars that still keep us apart."

⁹ George Lakoff, *Don't Think of the Elephant!: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate* (White River Junction, Vt.: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2004).

¹⁰ Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," in *Sister Outsider*, 110–13.

¹¹ Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990) 168–73.

There is a process at work among us in our nation and around the world, however, that may assist us in resisting this dualistic divide and conquer pattern. Slowly but surely, whether we like it or not, globalization is affecting everyone, oppressor, collaborator and oppressed alike so that none of us has just one unchanging identity. Mixtures of culture, race, religion, language, and just about everything are becoming a norm in a globalized society. This mixing or hybridity has been going on around the world for a long time so that some religious groups have had the possibility of struggling to create new forms of life where people recreate themselves and cultures out of the nationalities, languages, cultures, and gifts of those around them.

I experienced this hybridity at work while I was giving lectures in Sulawesi, Indonesia in 2004.¹² Shannon Clarkson and I went with a student from the Theological Seminary of Eastern Indonesia in Makassar on what was to be an interfaith exchange between students. When we arrived at a tiny urban home we found ourselves, two older white women, sitting on the floor of a small smoky room with ten young men from a Muslim education group called LAPAR. They had developed a program with the Muslim boys' schools to try to overcome the hatred and violence between Muslims and Christians in their area by training the teachers to respect different religious beliefs. To my surprise, their interest in talking with us was focused on a mutual discussion of postcolonial analysis.¹³ It was that analysis that had led them to try to find a better way of living together as Muslim and Christian partners in the conflicted community.

This challenge to recognize the religious and cultural pluralism of our societies and search for ways of living together in the midst of difference is also highlighted in Diana Eck's work on the Pluralism Project. Describing the task ahead she has said:

Whether in India or America, whether on New Hampshire Avenue or at Harvard University, the challenge for all of us today is how to shape societies, nations, neighborhoods, and universities that now replicate and potentially may reconfigure the differences that have long divided humankind.¹⁴

■ Difference as a Gift

One way to "reconfigure difference" is to shift our understanding of its meaning and use. Why should difference be used as a tool for othering and domination? If,

¹² See "Report of the ATESEA [Association for Theological Education in South East Asia] lectures, "Indonesia, 4–20 March 2004, by Letty M. Russell and J. Shannon Clarkson. Minutes of the Trustees of the Foundation of Theological Education in South East Asia, 9 December, 2004.

¹³ The term *postcolonial* refers not only to a temporal period after colonization or a political transfer of power, but also to a strategy for analysis, resistance, and reconstruction as scholars examine the contradictions between the colonial and neo-colonial rhetoric and the continuing cultural, political, economic, and religious oppression experienced by colonized peoples.

¹⁴ <http://www.harvard-magazine.com/issues/so96/faith.4.html>. See Diana L. Eck, *A New Religious America* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001).

as Audre Lorde says, its *miss use* is the problem, then difference can be a gift to our pluralistic world. In theological perspective difference is a gift, a gift of God. In our struggles to find a gracious neighbor in a world of danger and alienation we may have forgotten that the One who is our *Ground of Being*¹⁵ has created us in all our difference to be in relation to our *Ground* and to one another.

A world of riotous difference

The writers of the biblical story of creation in Genesis describe a world full of riotous difference. Each time as God creates life of every kind, there is the refrain: "And God saw that it was good" (Gen 1:25).¹⁶ At the end of the story God even saw that it was *very* good! But, as we know, differences become part of the problem of sin as the story moves on toward building towers.

The story of the Tower of Babel in Gen 11:1–9 is part of the prologue to the call of Sarah and Abraham in chapter 12. This prologue describes the way in which the authors experience alienation and sin in their world.¹⁷ Their account of the fall of the nations, with the resulting confusion of their language and dispersal across the earth, points toward God's actions to limit the results of sin. Paul Tillich's interpretation of the Protestant Principle reflects this story, for it speaks God's "no" to those who want to limit the gifts of difference and make their own difference the ultimate truth and way of life. Tillich's description of this divine "no" is:

The Protestant Principle, in name derived from the protest of the "protestants" against decisions of the Catholic majority, contains the divine and human protest against any absolute claim made for a relative reality, even if this claim is made by a Protestant church.¹⁸

In the Babel story the scattering and the confusion of language are God's response to those who seek to triumph through domination. By building the tower to heaven they try to consolidate their power and to become like God, controlling all the people through a unified language and political structure. "Babel" means *confuse* in Hebrew. The name, Babel, evokes in the hearers' minds the dominating power of the Babylonian empire and the intention of unity through uniformity.

Today, ancient Babylon lies near Bagdad, once again the site of fierce fighting and destruction, the site of empire building. It would seem that the towers are being rebuilt everywhere, neo-colonial towers of uniformity and control. Ivone Gebara adds to this picture of globalization as a refusal of God's gifts of difference by pointing out that today in all parts of the world people now find themselves inside

¹⁵ Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952) 186.

¹⁶ Unless otherwise indicated, scripture quotations are from the *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

¹⁷ Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 77.

¹⁸ Tillich, *Protestant Era*, 163.

the towers of Babel! Whether in Porto Alegre, Tokyo, Nairobi, or Chicago, people find themselves allowed to be different, but only if they eat, talk, dress, or dance alike. Within those towers the language of profit is always the same.¹⁹

In Genesis God's response to the tower builders's pride and power is, once more, to create the gift of difference! According to the theologian, José Míguez-Bonino, God's action is twofold: "the thwarting of the project of the false unity of domination *and* the liberation of the nations that possess their own races, languages, and families."²⁰

Differences of race, gender, sexual orientation, language or culture are not problems to be solved and controlled by a dominant group, rather they are important ways of assuring that God's gift of riotous diversity in all creation will continue. Because of God's gift, new voices are able to be heard and languages and cultures are able to flourish. Such a message is doubly important for us today as we watch the growing domination of the world by American imperialism and one economic system, and by a growing requirement that people learn English in order to be included in its global economic outreach.

Gift of understanding

The story of Pentecost in Acts 2:1–21 has often been understood as a sign of the reversal of Babel as nations are brought together and united in the outpouring of Christ's Spirit and the birth of the church. But we need to look again at its message of unity in the light of an interpretation of the confusion of tongues at Babel as God's gift of difference (Gen 11:1–9). If difference is a gift which helps to prevent domination, surely it is *not* something to be overcome.

One way to look at this would be to use a clue from Peter Gomes that Pentecost is about the gift of understanding. He says:

That was the thing that the Spirit did, and that was how the people could say that they each heard in their own language the wonderful works of God. The work of the Spirit is designed to foster understanding and ultimate reconciliation.²¹

God makes unity in difference possible by the gift of the Spirit enabling people of all nations to understand one another, no matter what language is spoken. Acts 2:6 says that "each one heard them speaking in the native language of each." It does not say that they no longer had their own languages and customs but that

¹⁹ Ivone Gebara, "Difference in a Divided World: A Feminist Perspective from Latin America," Yale Divinity School, 12 April, 2005, unpublished lecture.

²⁰ José Míguez Bonino, "Genesis 11:1–9: A Latin American Perspective," in *Return to Babel: Global Perspectives on the Bible* (ed. Priscilla Pope-Levison and John R. Levison; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1999) 13–16, at 15.

²¹ Peter Gomes, "Beyond the Human Point of View." Available at <http://www.covenantnetwork.org/gomes.html> or from the Covenant Network Administrative Office, c/o Calvary Presbyterian Church, 2515 Fillmore St., San Francisco, CA 94115.

they could understand one another. This is a different kind of world than the one envisioned by the builders at Babel. Here the unity comes, not through building a tower of domination or uniformity, but through communication.

God's gift of understanding across difference is expressed in the outpouring of the Spirit which transforms the lives of people and their communities. According to Justo Gonzalez, the Spirit does not so much create the structures and procedures, but rather it breaks open structures that confine and separate people so that they can welcome difference and the challenges and opportunity for new understanding that they bring.²²

Creative impulse for community

So far we have seen that difference is a gift God has had to offer to us over and over because it gets turned into domination and division through our personal and social sin. Yet the gifts of difference abound in our world, and we have an opportunity to respond to this mixture of cultures. Through the gift of the Spirit, difference can be a creative impulse for community. Community happens out of difference not sameness. Community brings people together across difference. If everyone is already alike as in a social club, a gang, or a family gathering, there is no need for a community in which different people contribute their different gifts to make up the whole.

It is participation together in some task or commitment that provides a bond to one another in the struggle to create community. One way of describing community is to speak of it as a close encounter with a third thing. It is the commitment and common task that holds a community together, not sameness. As Paul reminds us in I Cor 12:4–11 the Christian community is built up of "varieties of gifts." It is the *koinonia* or community in Christ that provides unity, across the differing gifts: a community in which the Spirit inspires understanding across differences.²³

The ever changing mixture of persons in our communities is clearly a source of great creativity if churches and institutions can learn to accept the gifts and not try to collect them in one uniform pattern. In this context, resistance to the mixture of gifts and ideas in communities affected by mixture or hybridity often comes from those who retreat into fundamentalism because they fear change and loss of control. They call for strict moral values and forget that such values include social justice along with personal choices. On the other hand, those who risk openness to the process of hybridity will have the advantage of moving beyond the old dualistic stereotypes of oppressor and oppressed. Because everyone is affected by the change, oppressed and oppressors alike need to join in creative ways to redistribute

²² Justo L. González, "Reading from My Bicultural Place: Acts 6:1–7," in *Reading from This Place: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in the United States* (ed. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 1:139–47, at 146.

²³ Letty M. Russell, *Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993) 161.

power and create communities, whether of shorter or longer duration. Who knows, in such a configuration Tillich's hope for new forms of religious and cultural life beyond the Protestant Era could come true.

■ Hospitality with Justice

The gift of difference does not end here, however, for it is also a creative impulse for hospitality with justice. An important aspect of Jewish, Muslim and Christian spirituality is the practice of hospitality or welcoming of the stranger. When we welcome those who come from different contexts and life experiences we learn from them, and we learn that there are many ways to understand and live out our unity in community. We become partners with those who are different by sharing together with them in service of others.

Solidarity with the stranger

In a world so full of danger and fear it becomes apparent that our search for a gracious God and a gracious neighbor needs to be expanded to a search for a gracious stranger. Indeed this is one of the deep commitments of Paul Tillich in his work with the religious socialists in Germany and his lifting up of what James Luther Adams calls the *religious-socialist principle*.²⁴ In opposing the self-centered autonomy of the bourgeois principle, Tillich and his colleagues connect commitment to social justice with the prophetic message of the Protestant principle: God's *no* to those who claim their own ultimate authority to oppress the workers, the homeless and marginalized. This need to be concerned for social, political, and economic injustice led Tillich in the search to overcome alienation through solidarity with the stranger.

Most certainly this need to search for forms of hospitality that could transcend traditional forms of unity through domination or limited diversity is rooted in the biblical message. In fact, Barbara Brown Taylor quotes Jonathan Sacks, chief rabbi of Great Britain, saying that "the Hebrew Bible contains only one commandment to love the neighbor but no less than 36 commands to love the stranger."²⁵

The basis of this practice of hospitality is that we were once strangers, exiles, nobodies and are now welcomed by God so that we might welcome others. At the same time hospitality is a gift in which we discover the presence of God in our mutual interaction with the stranger, as did Abraham and Sarah at the Oaks of Mamre (Gen 18:1–15).

The Greek New Testament abounds in exhortations to hospitality as well. Matthew 25 tells us that Christ promises to be present to us through our actions of

²⁴ Adams, "Tillich's Concept," 312.

²⁵ Barbara Brown Taylor, "Guest Appearance," *Christian Century* 122:19 (20 September 2005)

solidarity with the stranger (Matt 25:31–46). In his book *New Testament Hospitality* John Koenig says that:

philoxenia the term for hospitality used in the New Testament, refers literally not to a love of strangers per se but to a delight in the whole guest-host relationship, in the mysterious reversals and gains for all parties which may take place. For believers, this delight is fueled by the expectation that God or Christ or the Holy Spirit will play a role in every hospitable transaction. (Heb. 13:2; Rom. 1:11–12)²⁶

Koenig describes hospitality as “partnership with strangers” and understands hospitality as “the catalyst for creating and sustaining partnerships in the gospel.”²⁷ The Greek word, *philoxenia*, means “love of the stranger.” It is the opposite of xenophobia which means “fear of the stranger” or the one who is different. Christians are exhorted to hospitality by Paul who bids us “welcome one another” as Christ has welcomed us (Rom. 15:7).

This call for hospitality provides a clue to the possibility of welcoming difference, rather than creating a “cheap unity” built on compliance to one interpretation of faith in Christ. When we welcome those who come from different contexts and life experiences we do learn from them, and we learn that there are many ways to understand and live out our unity in Christ. These different ways can also open up our institutions as we seek to become partners with those who are different by sharing together in service with others. In this way we refrain from building our institutional “towers” and begin to focus on mutual understanding and our calling to serve in the world.

My Yale colleague, Margaret Farley, and I have had the opportunity to try this as members of the YDS Women’s Initiative on HIV/AIDS in Africa. We are joined in a partnership with the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians and the Yale Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS to support African women theologians in post doctoral studies. In this partnership the theologians can design projects on gender injustice and HIV/AIDS in African religious institutions. In these projects and beyond they support one another in organizing, teaching, and writing to promote change in their own religious contexts.²⁸

Just Hospitality

Our struggles to overcome fear of difference and to “break all the bars that still keep us apart” challenge our local, national, and global institutions to practice hospitality with justice. Christian hospitality is more than “terminal niceness.” It includes

²⁶ John Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 8.

²⁷ Ibid., 10. Russell, *Church in the Round*, 173.

²⁸ Margaret A. Farley, *Compassionate Respect: A Feminist Approach to Medical Ethics and Other Questions* (New York: Paulist Press, 2002) 3–20.

providing food, clothing and shelter to the homeless and welcoming strangers in our sanctuaries. But it also includes actions of genuine solidarity with those who are different from ourselves. Often the kind of hospitality that persons want is not to be cared for, or even to be given a job. What they want is to be able to find their own jobs, and to care for themselves and others.

The sort of hospitality that makes this possible would be one that sees the struggle for justice as part and parcel of welcoming the stranger. According to Robert McAfee Brown, if you read your Bible you will discover that *justice* appears to be God's middle name!²⁹ God's justice, or putting things right, includes the absence of oppression, not just the presence of distributive rights.³⁰ Difference is the gift that challenges us to practice such hospitality by resisting oppression and working for full human life and dignity for those with whom we stand in solidarity.

Margaret Farley has just published her book, *Just Love: A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics*.³¹ In it she points out that justice and love are not two separate actions. Rather, love includes justice in the care for other persons, and justice includes love in our relationships. In the same way, justice and hospitality flow into each other. If they do not, then a person receives care that lacks concern for their total well being and the removal of the causes of their predicament. In the same way, actions for justice with no concern to whom it harms or heals result in social structures that ignore the fabric of human relationships.

Our world is full of structures of domination that cannot be moved without attention to many different social, political, economic, and religious factors. For instance, the AIDS pandemic in Africa is a combination of many factors such as colonial and neo-colonial exploitation, gender inequality, ecological destruction, poverty, harmful cultural practices, political instability, lack of health care, and more.³² All of these must be taken into consideration in the practice of hospitality and healing even though that practice begins with one family, one medicine, one act of just hospitality at a time.

Hospitality is the practice of God's welcome by reaching out across difference to participate in God's actions bringing justice and healing in our world of crisis and our fear of the ones we call "other." As strangers to ourselves and to so many other people we have this possibility of learning to trust ourselves and others as a sign of God's concern for us all, and for all creation.

²⁹ Robert McAfee Brown, "The 'Preferential Option for the Poor' and the Renewal of Faith," in *Churches in Struggle: Liberation Theologies and Social Change in North America* (ed. William K. Tabb; New York: Monthly Review Press, 1986) 7–17, at 10. For an example of God's just actions see Psalm 82.

³⁰ Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference*, 39.

³¹ Margaret Farley, *Just Love: A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics* (New York: Continuum, 2006) 208.

³² Musa W. Dube, "Grant Me Justice: Towards Gender Sensitive Multi-Sectoral HIV/AIDS Readings of the Bible," in *Grant Me Justice! HIV/AIDS and Gender Readings of the Bible* (ed. Musa W. Dube and Musimbi Kanyoro; Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2004) 3–24, at 7.

Hospitality is not *the* answer to difference, but it is a challenge to us, pointing us to a future that God intends where riotous difference is welcomed! Hospitality will not *make us safe*, but it will lead us to risk joining in the work of mending the creation without requiring those who are different to become like us. I do not pretend that hospitality is a word Tillich would have chosen in confronting the chaos of his time, but I will claim that this search for a *theonomous future* of social justice is furthered by those of us who still take some of our clues from books like *The Protestant Era*.

One of my last memories of Paul Tillich in 1957 was as a man who was not afraid of the future, but rather eager to participate in the "more to come." Looking ahead, Tillich sent our entire theology class out of the Semitic Museum into the cool October air so that we could watch *the future space age happening overhead* as the Soviet satellite, Sputnik I, swept by. He did not see it all, and neither do we, but we know that the future that awaits is one that is surely as chaotic as the past; a future open to the work of those who choose to join in God's intention to restore creation's rainbow of difference!

The Selfe Undone: Individualism and Relationality in John Donne and Aemilia Lanyer¹

Constance Furey
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There is something right about the hoary old claim that Protestantism spawned individualism. It has been challenged from all sides: by those who argue the reverse, by historians of religion who point out that introspective piety was not unique to the early modern period, and by scholars who demonstrate that early Protestants were deeply invested in ecclesiology and communal rituals. Yet this claim—even though clunky and inadequate—remains important, not least because it highlights an enduring link between the way we interpret early Protestant texts and the way we understand individualism today. Consider John Donne’s famous denial of isolation, written nearly four hundred years ago: “No man is an Iland, intire of it selfe.” This statement compels us because it refutes what often feels irrefutable: that each person is, essentially, a solitary being, and that, while this existential state may be ameliorated, it is an unavoidable fact of life.²

¹ This essay draws on three lectures I gave during my year as a research associate in the Women’s Studies in Religion Program at Harvard University. My thanks to audiences at Harvard, Vanderbilt, and Brown Universities and, in particular, to the wonderful director of WSRP, Ann Braude; my WSRP colleagues Gannit Ankori, Shahla Haeri, Rosemary Carbine, and Jia Jinhua; and to Sarah Coakley, Janet Gyatso, Susan Harvey, Amy Hollywood, Stephanie Paulsell, and Jonathan Schofer.

² John Donne, “Meditation 17,” in *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions* (ed. Anthony Raspa; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) 86–87. Anthony Low makes an analogous point: “though [Donne] says ‘No man is an Iland,’ he is precursor to those who lament our isolation.” *The Reinvention of Love: Poetry, Politics, and Culture from Sidney to Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 61. The traditional argument that Protestantism definitively influenced modern western subjectivity is reiterated, e.g., in Charles Taylor’s influential *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989). The best of the recent work that complicates this claim is on Protestant ritualism and communalism; see Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (2d ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge

Donne himself is renowned for his introspective poetry, his use of an inward language that appealed to his contemporaries and to modern readers alike.³ His poems, to borrow from Anthony Low, “mark not just the discovery but, in a real sense, the invention of an inner space, a magic circle of subjective immunity from outward political threat and from culturally induced anxiety.”⁴ This is the reason scholars treat Donne not only as an exceptional poet but also as a representative figure, for a widespread consensus holds that, as Debora Shuger puts it, English literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth century focused on the “interior life of the spirit.”⁵ This particular narrative about the early modern period intrigues scholars today who are ineluctably shaped by the allure—and danger—of individualism and interiority.

Not surprisingly, texts by men form the basis for this narrative, and the story changes a bit if we focus instead on women writers. Shuger points out that people commonly assume that “Renaissance texts by and large confine subjectivity to male figures,”⁶ and contemporary women writers seem especially interested in community and relationships. This characterization of the contrast is, of course, akin to the observation often made today that men are more individualistic and women more relational. Versions of this claim range from simplistic (along the lines of the book *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*,⁷ or Lawrence Summers’s notorious remarks about the paucity of women scientists) to subtle (think of Carol Gilligan’s work on psychology and ethics), but all assume there are clear differences between men and women. Too little emphasized is the falsity of the very contrast between individualism and relationality. This dichotomy encourages us to think we can clearly differentiate self-reliance, autonomy, and individualism from interdependence, relationality, and communitarianism. We cannot. Comparing texts by male and female writers of the English Reformation will aid us in imagining

University Press, 2005), which includes an annotated bibliography of other important studies on the topic. Scholarship on early modern literature, and English Renaissance literature in particular, still tends to emphasize its focus on inwardness and interiority. Notable exceptions include John N. Wall, *Transformations of the Word: Spenser, Herbert, Vaughan* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1988) and Ramie Targoff, *Common Prayer: The Language of Public Devotion in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

³ See, e.g., Anne Ferry, *The “Inward” Language: Sonnets of Wyatt, Sidney, Shakespeare, Donne* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), and Peter Kaufman’s description of John Donne’s “inward researches” as a reflection of the “full internalization” of Protestantism in *Prayer, Despair, and Drama: Elizabethan Introspection* (Studies in Anglican History; Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1996) 1.

⁴ Low, *Reinvention of Love*, 51.

⁵ Debora Shuger, “Literature and the Church,” in *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature* (ed. David Loewenstein and Janel Mueller; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 521.

⁶ Debora Shuger, *The Renaissance Bible: Scholarship, Sacrifice, and Subjectivity* (The New Historicism 29; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) 166.

⁷ John Gray, *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus: A Practical Guide to Improving Communication and Getting What You Want in Your Relationships* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992).

more adequate accounts of ourselves as relational beings. While gender—along with race and class—is paramount among the forces that situate us as individuals in the world and thus lead us to understand and write about relationships in varying ways, we should not allow a dichotomized understanding of gender to structure our thinking; it is far more interesting to explore the manifold ways people seek and fear relationships.

In what follows, then, I contrast John Donne, poet of inwardness, with Aemilia Lanyer, a contemporary female writer who emphasized relationships. My goal is not to show that this description of their differences is inadequate—for I take that as the starting point—but instead to demonstrate how a more subtle comparison might give us the terms we need to escape this disjointed thinking and thus better understand our own relational selves.

Still largely unknown outside of literature departments, Aemilia Lanyer (1569–1645) is one of the most frequently studied of the numerous female authors from early modern Europe who have been rediscovered by feminist scholars. *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, the book of poems she published in 1611 (the same year as the King James Bible appeared), is one of the first books of religious verse published by an Englishwoman. Lanyer grew up during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (r. 1558–1603), a period when an Anglican “middle way” sought to draw Catholics and Calvinist Puritans into the same church. Her father was a court musician, probably from a Jewish family, who had immigrated to England from Italy. For several years, Lanyer was the mistress of Queen Elizabeth’s Lord Chamberlain. That relationship ended when she became pregnant, and she subsequently married another court musician. Lanyer and her husband were often financially strapped; after his death she fought a long and unsuccessful court battle with her husband’s family for the rights to a patent he had been awarded, and supported herself by working as a teacher.⁸

As a woman who had many contacts with rich and powerful people but few claims to social status herself, Lanyer used her writing to cultivate relationships with them. Before the title poem “Salve Deus,” a meditation on Christ’s Passion, Lanyer placed several poems addressed to individual noblewomen.⁹ In these dedicatory poems, some addressed to women she probably had not met, Lanyer impressed upon her readers that the very act of writing is relational: that the meaning of the text is informed by its readers; that she writes it for readers who have inspired her, for women whose exemplary piety and virtue makes it possible for her to write about

⁸ For background on Lanyer and her work, see Susanne Woods, *Lanyer: A Renaissance Woman Poet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) and the collected articles and annotated bibliography in *Aemilia Lanyer: Gender, Genre, and the Canon* (ed. Marshall Grossman; Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 1998).

⁹ Men and women alike used this genre of dedicatory poem to solicit financial support or acclaim. See the introduction to *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer: Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (ed. Susanne Woods; Women Writers in English 1350–1850; New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) for notes on which dedicatory poems were included in and omitted from the five volumes that survive.

virtue; and that reading her work can in turn make them better people and increase their love for Christ. Thus Lanyer infuses the pragmatics of patronage (the need for the socially inferior to flatter their superiors in order to curry money or favor) with theological significance. Subsequently, in the title poem itself, this focus on interactions becomes a full-fledged textual exploration of relationality, as Lanyer dramatizes Christ's interactions with his friends and seeks to create encounters between reader, writer, and Christ.

Lanyer's interest in relationality is sparked by the problem of efficacy. What compels someone, say a noblewoman with no economic or social motive for reading poems by a social inferior, to pick them up, to pay attention, to interact, as it were, with the text, with the writer, with the subjects of her poems? What inspires someone to try to emulate virtuous people or to love Christ? Lanyer's poems promised to give her readers something, to bring them closer to Christ, to enable them to reach out beyond themselves, to traverse some of the distance between human beings and between humanity and divinity. In that sense, the success of the poems hinged on Lanyer's claim that these texts transformed their readers by creating and nurturing relationships. To judge by the historical record, they failed to convince a wide readership of their efficacy: Only nine copies of the published volume survive, and there is no evidence that Lanyer received any financial or social benefits from her writing. Of course, sociologically speaking, it is no surprise that the rich and powerful did not embrace the poems of the wife of a marginal court musician; nonetheless, her attempts to create relationships with her readers are intriguing. Lanyer's theological poetics offers a distinctive example of how someone shaped by religion, and by Christianity in particular, weaves together a relational world, and thus suggests how devotional writings developed in an early modern Protestant context might give us alternate ways of thinking about subjectivity and western individualism.

Learning to appreciate how an interest in relationality pervaded Lanyer's poems is useful, moreover, because it prompts us to pay attention to otherwise overlooked features of poetry by male authors. In the final section of this paper, I will highlight a crucial difference between the theological poetics of Aemilia Lanyer and John Donne. Whereas Lanyer's poetry celebrates relationships, Donne returns again and again to the problems of dependency and vulnerability that inhere in relationships. While Lanyer's work is animated by the conviction that affective bonds and interactions inspire us to emulate models, Donne's sense of the rewards gained through union is tempered by his awareness of the troubles we encounter when we try to overcome distance and difference. Informed by different concerns, grappling with different problems, these poets correspond nevertheless in their sense that writing—poetry itself—serves both as a forum for discussing and as a means of enacting relationships.

■ Aemilia Lanyer and the Relational Text

The first of Lanyer's dedicatory poems addresses the most powerful of her desired patrons, Queen Anne of Denmark (1574–1619), wife of James I and generous supporter of writers and musicians, Ben Jonson among them. Positioning herself not only as a humble supplicant but also—and more intriguingly—as a mediator, Lanyer confidently directs the Queen to read, and to be transformed by, the poem:

Looke in this Mirroure of a worthy Mind,
Where some of your faire Vertues will appeare;
Though all it is impossible to find,
Unlesse my Glasse were chrystall, or more cleare:
Which is dym steele, yet full of spotlesse truth,
And for one looke from your faire eyes it su'th
(37–42)¹⁰

Lanyer hereby invites the Queen to embark on a mutual process of change. Describing the poem as a mirror through which the Queen might see herself in the best possible light, Lanyer also suggests that the poem itself will not be the clear, reflective surface that makes this perception possible unless the Queen gazes upon it. It is difficult to fully appreciate the dynamic process described in this sonnet; it is far easier to imagine the image of the text as a mirror as just that, an image.¹¹ Yet, the reader and writer alike put pressure on the text. What modern theorists seek to make visible, Lanyer insists on directly. Her text is changed by those who read it, and those who read it are changed by the text. If not a claim that Aemilia Lanyer, humble writer, and Anne of Denmark, exalted queen and patron, are friends, it is nevertheless a claim that they might encounter one another in and through a written text, and that this encounter might have real effects on how they perceive themselves and understand the world. If the Queen can see herself in the text, Lanyer continues, she can then see Christ in the text: “Here may your sacred Majestie behold / That mightie Monarch both of heav’n and earth” (43–44).

Lanyer's claim about her poem only makes sense when we accept the conflation of mirror and vessel. The poem contains truth, but its truth is a reflection of the Queen—not the Queen in all her imperfections, but the Queen as she sees herself in the mirror of the poem, as one who gazes upon Christ, perfection itself and thus the source of salvation. The identifications proliferate. Lanyer first likens Anne's daughter, Elizabeth, to Anne herself, both in her “pattern of all Pietie” and then in claiming that she might similarly transform the book and, by extension, Lanyer's scope of vision:

¹⁰ I use Susanne Woods's critical edition, but the Women Writers Project has also produced an online edition: <http://www.wwp.brown.edu/texts/lanyer.salvedeus.html>. I identify quotations by line number.

¹¹ This, for example, is the impulse at work in the caricatured description of New Criticism: the reader gazes at the text and sees herself, what she wants to see. The subsequent decades of reactions against New Criticism should, however, remind us that what really happens is interactive.

Then shall I thinke my Glase a glorious Skie,
 When two such glittering Suns at once appeare
 (97–98)

Their engagement might thereby replicate the experience Lanyer had through her relationship with Queen Elizabeth, admirable for her ability “still to remaine the same, and still her owne” (118). The emphasis on integrity, framed as a claim of stasis, becomes a crucial point of defense against the accusation that Lanyer seeks merely to curry favor rather than to honor Christ: “And what our fortunes doe enforce us to, She of Devotion and mere Zeale doth do” (119–120). Lanyer does not hereby assert that she herself meets that standard, but that she aspires to. Together with those she enlists through her writing, Lanyer imagines a shared attempt that might succeed:

Which makes me thinke our heavy burden light,
 When such a one as she will help to beare it:
 Treading the paths that make our way go right,
 What garment is so faire but she may weare it
 (121–24)

Christ alone is not enough. One needs models to know how to be devoted to Christ, and one needs, moreover, to interact with those models, to be accompanied by them, affected by them, in order to aspire to integrity and stasis.¹²

This is not to say that Lanyer is blind to the dark side of relationality. In the prose piece addressed “To the Vertuous Reader,” which appears after the dedicatory poems and immediately before the title poem, she acknowledges that models can cause problems because emulation often breeds competition: “Often have I heard, that it is the property of some women, not only to emulate the virtues and perfections of the rest, but also by all their powers of ill speaking, to eclipse the brightnes of their deserved fame” (97–98). Lanyer identifies this impulse to denigrate others as the root of the problem for women. To counter it, she proposes to hold up models without any equivocation, to demonstrate that examples are transformative, that virtue inspires virtue. Thus she brings to a climax her list of wise and good women from the Bible by describing how Christ affirmed the worth of women in every possible way, for he was “begotten of a woman, borne of a woman, nourished of a woman, obedient to a woman . . . he healed woman, pardoned women, comforted women: . . . [and] after his resurrection, appeared first to a woman, sent a woman to declare his most glorious resurrection to the rest of his Disciples” (43–50).

¹² This point that Lanyer imagined the mirror as a vessel rather than a self-reflexive surface complements Debora Shuger’s argument that, contra those who believe the invention of the clear glass mirror in the Renaissance encouraged a new, solipsistic self-consciousness, in fact, “the object viewed in the mirror is almost never the self” but rather an “exemplary image.” “The ‘I’ of the Beholder: Renaissance Mirrors and the Reflexive Mind,” in *Renaissance Culture and the Everyday* (ed. Patricia Fumerton and Simon Hunt; New Cultural Studies; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999) 21–41, at 22.

When grouped all together in this way, the evidence of good women should be “sufficient to inforce all good Christians and honourable minded men” (54–55) to leave off disparaging women and praise them instead. Yet in a time-honored rhetorical maneuver, Lanyer states as fact what she actually hopes to achieve. As she acknowledges in her closing lines, good examples in and of themselves will not catalyze change. Examples only become effective through an interactive, relational process of identification and inspiration.

Lanyer, in other words, hopes by her writing to inspire others to admire those she writes about, but this hope will only be realized if she can convince her readers to lend a sympathetic ear—to enter into a relationship with her text. Thus she imputes to her readers the virtues she needs them to have, complimenting their good qualities so that they might infuse her work with the same—that “according to their owne excellent dispositions, they will rather, cherish, nourish, and increase the least sparke of virtue where they find it, by their favourable and best interpretations, than quench it by wrong constructions” (58–61). By calling on her readers to be generous, to interpret her in good faith, Lanyer alludes to the process whereby an example becomes a catalyst. When one is sympathetic, inclined to see the good, one is inclined to emulate the good that one sees.

Lanyer thus insists that relationships are necessary even to the private process of self-discovery. In her dedicatory poem to *Ladie Lucie, Countess of Bedford*, for example, Lanyer recasts the familiar trope of the soul as a cabinet or closet, a private place that contains private thoughts, by portraying herself as the guide who tells the possessor how to use the closet. She first alerts the reader to the existence of the cabinet, presenting it not as something she already knows but as a place to be discovered:

Me thinkes I see faire Virtue readie stand,
T'unlocke the closet of your lovely breast,
Holding the key of Knowledge in her hand,
Key of that Cabbine where your selfe doth rest,
To let him in, by whome her youth was blest
(1–5)

The self resides within, in other words, but self-knowledge is enabled by a mediator who insists that this self-awareness is intersubjective. Clearly, one comes to know oneself by knowing Christ, and one knows Christ not only through oneself but also through another. Lanyer thus invites the reader to embark with her on a devotional journey that involves an active interplay of reading and discernment. Lanyer first offers her reader a detailed description of Christ, stuck with arrows as in popular images of the martyred St. Sebastian, and explains that Christ's wounds are themselves a text, in which one can read salvation. Here, then, are two simultaneous ways of reading: Lanyer's words enable the reader to see Christ's body as a text. The success of this reading depends, however, on the reader. Lanyer underscores this by moving from injunction to request:

You whose cleare Judgement farre exceeds my skil,
 Vouchsafe to entertaine this dying lover
 (15–16)

If the reader is receptive, willing to see and know, then Lanyer can offer her what Christ reveals. Likening “Salve Deus” to the Old Testament ark of the covenant, Lanyer promises that her poem can facilitate the reader’s apprehension of a true self: “About this blessed Arke bright Angels hover: / Where your faire soule may sure and safely rest, / When he is sweetly seated in your brest” (19–21). This is the self understood in relation with Christ, nurtured through relationship with the author and the text, which hereby works as a kind of spiritual advisor.¹³

In another dedicatory poem, to Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, prominent patron and famous writer in her own right, Lanyer develops this point in another way by presenting the act of reading as akin to a sacrament. If Mary Sidney deigns to grace the text with her attention, she will see Christ, Lanyer explains. Not only that, she will receive Christ, as from a priest:

Receive him here by my unworthy hand,
 And reade his paths of faire humility
 (221–22)

In these two compact lines, Lanyer evokes a Protestant understanding of the Eucharist: real reception through textual apprehension.¹⁴ And she herself is the priest, the one with the power to give Christ, not because of her worthiness but because of the worthiness of the one she gives. Thus, like priests and recipients in the Catholic mass, Lanyer both asserts and displaces herself, proclaiming her unworthiness while presuming to hope nevertheless. And presuming, thus, to imagine that her text—not just the inspiration or vision she writes about, but the writing itself—means she has something to give, Lanyer stands as a priest, even as Christ himself, inviting others to Christ’s supper:

And therefore, first I heare present my Dreame,
 And next, invite her Honour to my feast
 (205–6)

The feast is simultaneously Christ’s Passion and Lanyer’s poem about it. And Lanyer and Mary Sidney alike, or so this poem seeks to claim, work together as writers to place themselves together with Christ, to fill

¹³ For a complementary argument about how Lanyer’s poems enact erotic desire, and female-female desire in particular, see Jonathan Goldberg: “In Lanyer’s poem, it is entirely possible to regard Virtue’s penetration of Lucy’s heart as a same-sex encounter, indeed, even to regard the ‘proper’ substitution of male lover for female key-holder as configuring Christ as a kind of supplementary instrument for penetration (as a dildo); at the very least, Virtue acts as a kind of partner in this triangular relationship, as she passes on to the Countess her former lover.” *Desiring Women Writing: English Renaissance Examples* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997) 32.

¹⁴ On the Eucharist in English Protestant literature, see Robert Whalen, *The Poetry of Immanence: Sacrament in Donne and Herbert* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

the eies, the hearts, the tongues, the eares

Of after-comming ages, which shall reade
Her love, her zeale, her faith, and pietie
(160–62)

This complex understanding of what a relationship with Christ entails is a key theme in Lanyer's title poem, "Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum." Throughout the poem, Lanyer affirms the traditional Christian message, transformed into the singular salvific truth by Protestant divines, that believers should recognize their utter dependence on Christ alone ("If he vouchsafe to guide my Hand and Quill, . . . Then I will tell of that sad blacke fac'd Night" [324, 327]). Moreover, she reinforces the importance of interactive relationships when she begins the story of the Passion by dwelling on the failures of Christ's friends. These include not only the memorable prediction that Peter would renounce his allegiance to Christ three times before dawn, but the more subtle inability of Peter and two other disciples to be present to Christ in a time of doubt and fear. Freely drawing on details from the three synoptic Gospels, Lanyer also enhances the scene to emphasize the significance of the friendship as she describes what happened in the garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus went to pray the night before he was arrested. In Luke, Jesus addresses all his disciples as a group, telling them to pray that they might escape his fate (Luke 22:40), but in Mark and Matthew he asks three disciples in particular to come with him, and, when they are alone together, breaks down and admits that he feels as though his heart would break (Matt 26:37–39; Mark 14:33–34). Lanyer expands on this element from Mark and Matthew to highlight that Jesus sought to share the burden of sadness with friends:

To them good *Jesus* opened all his woe,
He gave them leave his sorrows to discusse,
His deepest griefes, he did not scorne to shewe
These three deere friends, so much he did intrust:
Beeing sorowfull, and overcharg'd with griefe,
He told it them, yet look'd for no reliefe
(371–76)

In the very next stanza, however, this eloquent quest for the comforts of companionship becomes fodder for a message about the futility of trying to achieve it: "Sweet Lord," Lanyer asks, "how couldst thou thus to flesh and blood / Communicate thy griefe? Tell of thy woes?" (377–78). The answer is that he could not. Fallible humans all, the three select disciples failed even to fulfill the minimal request that they stay awake.

Even those three Friends, which on thy Grace depends,
Yet shut those Eies that should their Maker see
(419–20)

Drawing on a detail that appears only in Luke, Lanyer suggests that an angel conveyed to him the comfort he did not find from his friends ("His Angel did appeare from Heaven to thee, / To yield thee comfort in Extremitie" [431–32; Luke 22:43]). Yet she does not relinquish the idea that Christ's love was not the undifferentiated, impersonal love of a distant deity but instead, crucially, akin to the human love manifest among friends.

Thus when Christ faced "ugly Death" it meant, in Lanyer's rendition, the time when

Thou now must leave those Friends thou held'st so deere,
Yea those Disciples, who did most adore thee
(459–60)

Even after the stark account of their failure, their sin, their incapacity to sustain Christ, who had to rely instead on the supernatural intervention of an angel, Lanyer reiterates the mutual love that tied Christ and the disciples together as friends. In Lanyer's poem, the drama of friendship fulfilled (if only partially) and betrayed overshadows the scene of men with swords seizing a criminal. Lanyer conveys the message that Christ's sacrifice was the self-sacrificing love of a friend who wanted to save his compatriots by staying within the confines of the garden and describing Christ as one who gives himself up on the condition that the authorities let his friends go free.

Later in the poem, Lanyer memorably defends Eve as one whose "fault was onely too much love" (801). We should read this claim against her insistence here that the disciples were reprehensible because they did not love enough—not, in other words, because of their selfishness, lack of resolve, or treachery per se, but specifically for their failure to stay faithful to a friend:

Those deare Disciples that he most did love
.....
When triall of affliction came to prove,
They first left him, who now must leave them all:
.....
Though they protest they never will forsake him,
They do like men, when dangers overtake them
(625, 627–28, 631–32)

Here Lanyer sets up a continuum of love, rather than a simple polarity, so that even as Jesus epitomizes a perfection that no human can achieve, and Christ alone is "bound to loose us all" (633), human beings exhibit a varied capacity of love and it is this variety that she wants to emphasize. In lauding (and excusing) Eve as one who loved too much, in contrast with the disciples, who are indicted as those who loved too little, Lanyer's poem implicitly challenges not only the traditional assumption that Eve brought sin into the world, but also the tendency to read the faithful disciples' failings as minor compared to Judas's dramatic betrayal, Pilate's tyranny, or the high priests' persecutorial zeal.

So, too, the poem takes Mary's sorrow at Calvary as an occasion to explore the pitfalls and glories of nearly perfect love. In her grief, Mary is nearly annihilated because of her close identification with Christ:

How could shee choose but thinke her selfe undone,
He dying, with whose glory shee was crowned?
(1013–14)

This glory, the poem suggests, came about through a mutual movement of love, as in parallel couplets, without claims of causality, it describes how God magnified Mary and she "did pleade for Love at great Jehovaes gate" (1036). Her plea becomes an efficacious desire because she was not held down by passionate human attachments:

Farre from desire of any man thou art,
Knowing not one, thou art from all men free:
When he, to answere this thy chaste desire,
Gives thee more cause to wonder and admire
(1077–80)

This claim that detachment enabled a humble woman to feel the right desire, to focus all her desire on God, is paradoxical when read in light of the earlier lament that the loss of Christ undid Mary's very sense of self. Throughout the poem Lanyer stresses that the power of Christ's love was rooted in Christ's particularity, Christ's embodiment as a loving friend and son. Consequently, as the object of transcendent love, a love directed not to fallible humans but to an eternal savior, he nevertheless taught the importance of attachments, of particular, intimate relationships as the site of true love.¹⁵

Thus, when Lanyer concludes this account of the passion in addressing the reader directly and summarizing the lessons learned, she insists on the coincidence, rather than transcendence, of apparent contradictions: "And here both Griefe and Joy thou maist unfold" (1171) for the miracle of Christ is to unite "death, life, misery, joy and care" (1179). The message is not that one should overcome particular attachment and tragic implications of human finitude, death, and grief above all, but instead that they can be experienced anew, experienced through attachment to Christ as Christ experienced them:

O wonder, more than man can comprehend,
Our Joy and Griefe both at one instant fram'd,
Compounded: Contrarieties contend

¹⁵ Janel Mueller argues that using the salutation as a locution is central to Lanyer's complex passage on Mary and to her "broader authority as a religious poet." This form was rare in poetry but is characteristic of many biblical passages. Thus, Mueller concludes, it is "a speech act uniquely expressive of the capacity to apprehend truth that distinguishes women and the feminized Christ: not only does knowing aright bespeak naming aright, but naming and knowing cast in the form of a salutation bespeak a direct, intimate encounter with another person that authorizes the salutation itself." "The Feminist Poetics of Aemilia Lanyer's 'Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum,'" in Grossman, *Gender, Genre, and Canon*, 224.

Each to exceed, yet neither to be blam'd
(1217–20)

To love Christ, according to Lanyer's poem, is to feel as Christ felt: passionate joy, unremitting sorrow, an excess which should not be denied but embraced.

■ John Donne and the Problem of Love

Although Donne is famous in a way Lanyer may never be, the lives of these poets ran on parallel tracks—at least for a time. Like Lanyer, Donne was born into a family that did not fit easily into the religious mainstream of Elizabethan England: Donne's parents were from prominent Catholic families. He too spent much of his early life dependent on those with significant political power and began to write religious poetry after losing access to these powerful figures—in his case, because he secretly married the daughter of one of his patrons and was subsequently banished. Further, the Sidney Psalter—the celebrated translation of the Psalms begun by Sir Philip and finished by his sister, Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, after his death in 1586—exercised a distinctive influence on Donne and Lanyer alike. Unlike Lanyer, however, Donne eventually found a route to social status; he became Dean of St. Paul's, the most influential pulpit in England.¹⁶

Of course, the fact that these similar life paths ended with the man financially and socially better off than the woman underscores the masculine privilege that also affected their literary reputations. Other scholars who have compared these two poets suggest, too, that each visualized God in his or her own image, Lanyer by emphasizing Christ's feminized qualities of submissiveness, pacifism, and silence, and Donne by writing about God as a jealous male lover much like himself. However, the diversity in their treatment of how and why relationships are important shows more complexity than this conclusion about their reliance on gendered self-understanding would suggest.¹⁷

If Lanyer's poetry was structured by the question of how we impel ourselves to overcome the difference and distance that separates humans from each other and from God, Donne's problem was how to overcome the tension between singularity and unity—between the appeal and necessity of self-sufficiency and the desire for a self-transcendent unity. Like Lanyer, albeit more equivocally, he found an answer

¹⁶ The main source for accounts of Donne's life is Izaak Walton, "The Life of Dr. Donne," in *The Lives of John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Richard Hooker, George Herbert and Robert Sanderson* (ed. George Saintsbury; The World's Classics 303; London: Oxford University Press, 1927; repr. 1950) 3–64. Good short articles and a select bibliography of classic and recent work on Donne can be found in the recent *Cambridge Companion to John Donne* (ed. Achsah Guibbory; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

¹⁷ See, e.g., Michael Schoenfeldt's subtle comparative analysis, "The Gender of Religious Devotion: Amelia Lanyer and John Donne" in *Religion and Culture in Renaissance England* (ed. Claire McEachern and Debora Shuger; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 209–33. Marshall Grossman offers a more philosophical comparison in "The Gendering of Genre" (*Gender, Genre, and the Canon*, 130–46).

in poetry itself. In his love poems as well as in his religious poems, he alternately celebrated and feared unity, the homogenous world that love creates. We need other people, relations, ties that bind, but these same ties threaten to make us dependent, stripped of the singularity that makes us recognizable to ourselves.¹⁸ For Donne, writing seems to offer a partial solution, because the condensed structure and symbolic language of poetry enabled him to explore relations at a remove from the intensity of personal encounters, and thereby to affirm singularity even as he imagined unity.¹⁹

In his poems, Donne eloquently claimed that love creates a new reality that makes what came before nearly unimaginable. "I wonder by my troth, what thou, and I / Did, till we lov'd?" (1–2) he asks in an early poem, "The Good-Morrow."²⁰ In thinking about both human and divine love, Donne imagines that the power of love comes from this capacity to create another world, to turn the individual into a relational being, part of a unity that transcends particularity:

For love, all love of other sights controules,
And makes one little roome, an every where.
.....
Let us possesse one world, each hath one, and is one.
My face in thine eye, thine in mine appears,
And true plaine hearts doe in the faces rest,
.....
What ever dyes, was not mixt equally;
If our two loves be one, or, thou and I
Love so alike, that none doe slacken, none can die
(10–11, 14–16, 19–21)

Yet Donne repeatedly emphasizes, both in his Holy Sonnets and in his love poems, that relationships make one vulnerable and dependent. Self-sufficiency has its advantages. Moreover, Donne's poetry reminds those who would claim that divine love escapes these dangers that undifferentiated love is no love at all ("my face in thine eye, mine in thine appears"). Love derives power from specificity, the sense that the beloved is unique and different from oneself, even as it promises to eliminate the distance between lover and beloved.²¹ To love is to feel contrary pulls of difference and union, particularity and universality.

¹⁸ Anthony Low argues, by contrast, that Donne imagined love as an escape from the world: "only love, ensconced in its private space" escapes universal bondage (*Reinvention of Love*, 51).

¹⁹ See Eve Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985) for intriguing thoughts about how identification is related to desire: "In Lacan and those who have learned from him, an elaborate meditation on introjection and incorporation forms the link between the apparently dissimilar processes of desire and identification" (24).

²⁰ John Donne, "The Good-Morrow," in *The Complete English Poems of John Donne* (ed. C. A. Patrides; London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1985). I take all quotations of Donne's poetry from this edition; the parenthetical references indicate line numbers.

²¹ This was a key issue for English Renaissance thinkers. Hooker, for example, argued that the

Thus Donne's poetic claims that love creates the only true reality are interlaced with claims that the unity it promises cannot be achieved. "The Legacie," for example, begins with an affirmation of life framed as a description of death: "When I dyed last, and, Deare, I dye / As often as from thee I goe" (1-2). This is not merely a flowery way of professing devotion but the beginning of a complicated reflection on what love does to selfhood.

I heard mee say, Tell her anon,
That my selfe, (that's you, not I,)
Did kill me, and when I felt mee dye,
I bid mee send my heart, when I was gone
(9-12)

The reader who wonders about the distinction between "I" and "me" in the first line will find no relief in the confusing mix of self-possession and self-disavowal that follows. Love brings death, not to the self exactly, but to the self possessed by the beloved ("that's you, not I / Did kill me"). In love, then, death and survival coincide. We might put it this way: the self was killed by the mixed self that love creates. With this Donne suggests that the self endures, if only to experience its own loss, in the very experience of loving another.

The self survives its own death because love's possession is never complete. Part of the self stands akimbo, not fully encompassed by the merger of two into one. So at the end of "The Legacie," the speaker asserts that lovers do not, cannot, fully possess or know one another by describing the outcome of the speaker's nearly futile search for the heart his lover took:

Yet I found something like a heart,
But colours it, and corners had,
It was not good, it was not bad,
It was intire to none, and few had part
(17-20)

The heart was nearly unrecognizable because of its "colours" (specious appearances) and "corners" (secrets), and could not be judged or described in any simple terms. We might call it an uncontainable remainder, not fully possessed by anyone because not fully knowable by anyone (neither the "I," the "me" or "my self, that is you, not I").

Absent simple unity, however, lovers are buffeted by the crosswinds of dependency and self-sufficiency. As Donne emphasizes in "The Message," a beautiful, bitter poem about possession, love begets vulnerability. In a string of defiant laments, the speaker both bewails and rejects dependence upon his lover: "Send home my long strayed eyes to me, . . . Send home my harmlesse heart againe. . . . Yet send me back my heart and eyes, / That I may know, and see thy lyes" (1, 9,

general could be understood only through the particular (on this see John Wall, *Transformations of the Word*, 52).

17–18). Tragically, because love alleviates solitude, we feel the isolation all the more acutely when love fails, and its loss transforms a feeling of self-sufficiency into an unbearable sense of dependence.

We are, that is, still separate beings, however much in love. Donne's vision is complex because he eloquently celebrates and laments this fact. Even in "The Extasie," under a title celebrating a joyful feeling of self-transcendence, Donne somberly describes love as that which "defects of loneliness controules" (44). If love can only control our loneliness, and not banish it altogether, perhaps we should celebrate solitude. Donne insists, however, that this is the most dangerous sort of self-delusion. In 1611, the same year that Lanyer published her poems, he wrote the first of his "Anniversaries" in memory of Elizabeth Drury, daughter of a nobleman who subsequently became Donne's generous patron. "For every man alone thinkes . . . that there can be / None of that kinde, of which he is, but hee" (216–18). Anomie and atomization will overtake the world if people do not appreciate that relations are crucial. In writing about a dead girl he had never met, Donne seems to reach a level of abstraction that lifts him beyond the contradictions inherent to human love. Idealized as a woman of virtue who transcended the fragmentation of life in the world, Drury was "she that had all Magnetique force alone / To draw, and fasten sundred parts in one" (221–22).²² From here, it seems a simple step to affirm that this is the nature of divine love: that it draws all things together and makes solitude impossible as it engrafts particular people into a transcendent whole, like the body of the Church, the body of Christ. But relations with God do not work this way—as Donne signals by describing divine love in various contexts as "strange" or "painful." If it were entirely self-sacrificing, self-negating, as it seems Christ's love was, then it is so unlike any love we experience that we have to think hard about how to understand it.²³

In the Holy Sonnet that begins with the hate-mongering command "Spit in my face, you Jewes," Donne uses the trope of blaming others for Christ's death as an occasion to indict himself for crucifying Christ daily and thereby set up the key issue in the poem: how, as one whose very being repudiates Christ, can he love Christ? So the crux of the poem comes halfway through, with this plaintive plea:

²² Drawing on Hegel to describe the link between patriarchy and language, Grossman argues that Donne uses the death of Drury to make an "end of the effectiveness of the figure of idealized femininity as the constitutive other of men's discourse. . . . 'Shee' was a conventional and visual embodiment of a sublimed and subjected desire"—and thereby also a sign of coherent significance ("The Gendering of Genre," 133). Crucially, Grossman argues that in "Description of Cooke-ham," Lanyer finds a "distinctively alternative mode of reading the Logos" (Ibid., 137).

²³ Fear of fragmentation has been acknowledged as a central theme in Donne's work since T.S. Eliot argued that Donne and other metaphysicals defended an organic world against the forces of atomization (*Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry* [ed. Ronald Schuchard; London: Faber and Faber, 1993]). David Hawkes persuasively links this to structural and economic changes in Renaissance England in *Idols of the Marketplace: Idolatry and Commodity Fetishism in English Literature 1580–1680* (Early Modern Cultural Studies; New York: Palgrave, 2001). I am interested specifically in how this fear influences Donne's assumptions about love—love of other people and of God.

"Oh let mee then, his strange love still admire" (9). What keeps him from admiring Christ's "strange love" is a sense of self so far removed from Christ's. How can one admire Christ's masochistic refusal to use his power, to assert himself, to love even when he was not loved back?

Donne finds it difficult to desire one whose love he does not understand. In the Holy Sonnet "What if this present were the worlds last night?" he challenges himself to see the beauty in Christ's crucified body. Beauty, he concludes, in this remarkably dense and convoluted sonnet, has no fixed or objective reality. The relationship itself creates beauty—through the judgment of one, the reaction of another, and the effect wrought in and through this interaction. Thus at the end of the poem the poet only discerns Christ's beauty by claiming it, and then only conditionally, by asserting a response it hopes to provoke. Just as in an earlier poem Donne hopes to admire Christ's strange love, here he seeks to perceive Christ's tortured body as beautiful and comforting rather than terrifying or ugly. Still, there are no guarantees. The change cannot be simply willed or imposed but only emerges relationally in writing.

Writing, as Donne implies in several poems, has a peculiar status. It is self-contained in a way that conversation or physical encounters are not. Performed in a solitary state, it is not immediately interactive, and so underscores Donne's emphasis on exploring how to break free of self-containment. Thus the Bible, God's communicative act delivered through human authors, is a crucial model that affirms the transformative power of poetic language, as Donne reminds himself and his readers in the "First Anniversary," in which he defends his choice to write a poem about Elizabeth Drury against those who would claim this genre might trivialize her death.

Vouchsafe to call to minde, that God did make
A last, and lasting peece, a song. He spake
To Moses, to deliver unto all
(461–63)

Donne thus imagines Christ as a muse who inspires him to write the words that lift him out of himself, to rescue him from damnation in a move by which the traditional atonement and the poet's confidence in the written word merge together. As he writes in the Holy Sonnet on the Ascension: "And if thy holy Spirit, my Muse did raise, / Deigne at my hands this crown of prayer and praise" (13–14). So too in the Holy Sonnet with the telling first line "I am a little world made cunningly," Donne presents himself as alone, as dying alone, yet redeemed also by new (albeit hopeless) desires transmitted by another's writing:

You which beyond that heaven which was most high
Have found new sphears, and of new lands can write,
Powre new seas in mine eyes, that so I might
Drowne my world with my weeping earnestly
(5–8)

Reading words written by someone else, or writing about what another person's text might enable him to see, he hopes to heal the burns inflicted by lust and envy.

Significantly, in the funeral elegy for Elizabeth Drury, Donne focuses on the relationship between writing and personal relationships. Writing, he insists, is inadequate, mere "carkas verses," except insofar as it successfully conveys the person it seeks to represent.

Yet shee's demolish'd: Can we keepe her then
In workes of hands, or of the wits of men?
Can these memorials, ragges of paper, give
Life to that name, by which name they must live?
Sicly, alas, short-lived, aborted be
Those Carkas verses, whose soul is not shee
(9–14)

In this way, Donne hesitantly affirms that writing can extend the transformative power of desire and emulation—the desire to emulate—if and when it conveys a living presence.

■ Conclusion

This idea that loving Christ involves excess and displacement is a key reason that the genre of devotional poetry encourages writers to play with gendered norms or even to invert gender. Female writers present themselves as masculine by speaking authoritatively, by undertaking a heroic quest for the beloved or, as in Lanyer's case, by asserting a priestly prerogative to present Christ to a supplicant; male writers take on a female role as passive, patient, or submissive, offering to open themselves up to God imagined as Judge or all-powerful Father. In this context, divine gender, too, is malleable. Christ is often feminized, imagined as patient, nurturing, sorrowful, or suffering; God or Christ may be cast in the role of the courtly lady, the one who withholds her love until she is won over. Numerous studies about Aemilia Lanyer and John Donne have focused on gender and eroticism; some of the best of this recent work has shown that both explored homoeroticism in a way that has, embarrassingly, been overlooked. So Donne, for example, imagines God as a jealous or even violent lover who penetrates his very being, and Lanyer glorifies women not only by exalting a feminized Christ but also by presenting him as a friend to women—who themselves are bound not only to him but also to each other through the force of same-sex desire. These works highlight the importance of eros in thinking about the power of devotional writing to transform and to subjugate.

Nevertheless, as the comparisons in this essay suggest, it is equally important to focus on the ways that gender informs our understanding of similarity and difference, identity and otherness. Such a focus raises questions about relationality insofar as, when we know someone relationally, we know them through their predicates, that is, through social markers of identity; we know them, fundamentally, as gendered beings, as male or female. Yet, there is no cocooned subjectivity, no

state of being untouched by social encounters, no essence. There is, in other words, always already gender. For psychoanalytically-inspired feminists, this means that all of life is structured by the drama of gender difference. But gender is fluid—not only because physical bodies vary and change, both in appearance and in how they live and act in the world, but also because this living and working entails a constant process of making and remaking subjectivity. Thanks to theorists who have highlighted this fluidity—Judith Butler paramount among them²⁴—we are now in a position to learn anew from Renaissance writers, from John Donne, Aemilia Lanyer, and other men and women who used the conscious precision of poetry to explore subtle interchanges of similarity and difference, distance and closeness, vulnerability and independence. Then we will learn from them not only about the varied possibilities for subjectivity and intimacy in the Renaissance but also about the ethics and power of relationality today.

²⁴ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990; 2d ed. 1999).

The Social History of Satan, Part Three: John of Patmos and Ignatius of Antioch: Contrasting Visions of “God’s People”

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■ Leviathan and Satan — A Composite Image of Evil

At the climactic moment of the cosmic drama in the book of Revelation, the seer tells how two great portents appeared in heaven, the first a woman “clothed with the sun” (12:1). As in a dream, the scene changes, and he sees her pregnant, “crying out in the agony of giving birth,” being menaced by a “great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns on each of its heads” (12:3); thus the seer pictures Israel in danger, confronting her enemies, the foreign oppressors.

At this point John transforms traditional imagery, as he does throughout his prophecy, veering into a startlingly non-traditional direction. John knew, of course, that the imagery he revises here, with echoes from Genesis and the psalms to *1 Enoch*, had been developed especially by Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel to characterize Israel’s alien enemies — “the nations” such as Egyptians and Babylonians — as mythological monsters, often dragons like Behemoth and Leviathan who have fought against God from the beginning of time.¹ John takes his cues in particular from Isaiah 26:17–27:1, where the prophet depicts Israel as a woman crying out

¹ For discussion and references, see, for example, Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* (Harvard Dissertations in Religion 9; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars, 1976); Neil Forsyth, *The Old Enemy: Satan and the Combat Myth* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987), as well as the articles cited in note 6.

I regret that the excellent collection of articles just now published, edited by David Barr, was not available while I was writing (except for a then unpublished article which Paul Duff kindly lent after discussion at the SBL); see now, *The Reality of Revelation: Rhetoric and Politics in the Book of Revelation* (SBLSymS 39; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006).

“in the pangs of giving birth” (26:17), until “that day” when the Lord will come “to punish the inhabitants of the earth” (26:21), and “with his cruel, and great, and strong sword will punish Leviathan, the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will kill the dragon that is in the sea” (27:1).

Abruptly, however, John breaks with tradition to reveal a new — composite — image of evil. Having pictured Leviathan menacing Israel as scene one of the cosmic drama, John suddenly shifts the expected course of the narrative to scene two, the messiah’s birth, which signals the outbreak of “war in heaven:”

Michael and his angels [were] fighting against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back, but they were defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven (12:7–9).

But, a traditionalist might object: When was the dragon ever up “in heaven”? And how could the primordial monster have angels as allies? According to a tradition well known to John, as he had already shown in his own narrative, God’s ancient adversary dwells far below, as “the beast that comes up from the bottomless pit” (11:7). When he appears, he emerges from the “depths” — from the abyss, or the primordial sea. How, then, could the dragon ever have claimed a “place” for himself and his allies in heaven, or stood at the head of an angelic army, making war against “Michael and his angels”? Is John simply getting his stories scrambled, or is he making what is for him a central point of his revelation?

Yet John boldly combines the Satan tradition of the rebellious angelic commander with the Leviathan traditions involving the dragon from the abyss in order to reveal a great secret: that the one who once held power in heaven and fell down from there like a star was actually none other than

the great dragon, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. (12:9)

Scholars long have noted that John is the first to identify the serpent of Eden with Satan,² and the only author of any Jewish or Christian literature of his time to speak of “war in heaven.”³ While other scholars have noted these bold innovations and have traced the theological and literary means by which he makes them, what I intend to ask here is for what reasons John does so. What, for example, do these innovations have to do with social history — how John envisions holy war here on earth? What urgent and pressing concerns impel John to make them?

This article thus continues research published in two previous articles (“The Social History of Satan,” parts 1 and 2),⁴ and makes three suggestions, here sketched

² See, for example, Forsyth, *The Old Enemy*, 199–257, and David Aune, *Revelation 6–16* (WBC 52B; Nashville: Nelson, 1997) 696.

³ Forsyth, *The Old Enemy*, 254; Aune, *Revelation*, 691–710.

⁴ Elaine Pagels, “The Social History of Satan, the ‘Intimate Enemy’: A Preliminary Sketch,” *HTR* 84:2 (1991) 105–28; and “The Social History of Satan, Part II: Satan in the New Testament

in brief. First, I suggest that John's graphic description of "war in heaven" is the key to understanding his practical concerns as a prophet: namely, that he combines the Satan and Leviathan traditions in order to persuade his constituency, God's "holy ones," that they now have to fight on two fronts at once. What he reveals in Revelation 12 is what he recognizes as the great secret—that the enemy in heaven is none other than God's ancient enemy, the dragon, a.k.a. both "Leviathan" and "Satan." John intends to show that those he identifies as "intimate enemies" among Jesus' followers now have joined forces with hostile outsiders in an unprecedented—and unholy—alliance. Since he takes this to mean that the forces of evil thus have gained overwhelming power, John believes he is impelled to sort out who really does belong to God's people and who does not. For much as he detests the "beasts," John sees inside enemies as even more dangerous: he says that Jesus praises those who truly are "holy ones," but warns that there are others, lurking among them, whom he "hates," as well as some in the middle.⁵ Thus from the first century to the twenty-first, John's powerful and innovative narrative has offered his readers an example of how to "out" certain insiders by identifying deviants among them as, in effect, secret agents for forces they see rampant in the monstrous culture outside.

Second, when asking who the enemies are that John warns against, we probably all would agree about the alien enemies. John gives such obvious clues that we cannot fail to identify them with the Roman forces and their supporters. Much more complicated—and much more contested—is the question of whom he sees as Satan's allies within the "assemblies" he addresses. To what extent, as one scholar puts it, can we locate actual first-century followers of Jesus behind John's polemical characterizations?⁶ No doubt the most complicated question, recently addressed again by Paul Duff and David Frankfurter, among others, is whom the prophet has in mind when he denounces "those who say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan" (2:9, 3:9).⁷ Although we must consider this ques-

Gospels," *JAAR* 52/1 (1994) 201–41.

⁵ Paul Duff makes this perceptive suggestion especially in chapter four of *Who Rides the Beast? Prophetic Rivalry and the Rhetoric of Crisis in the Churches of the Apocalypse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 48–60; he also shows there the close relationship between John's vision of the "whore of Babylon" and the prophet he calls "Jezebel."

⁶ David Frankfurter, "Jews or Not? Reconstructing the 'Other' in Rev 2:9 and 3:9," *HTR* 94 (2001) 403ff.; for an incisive discussion, see Elisabeth S. Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); see also *ibid.*, *Revelation: Vision of a Just World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991); Adela Yarbro Collins, "Vilification and Self-Definition in the Book of Revelation" *HTR* 79 (1986) 308–20; A. Thomas Kraabel, "The Roman Diaspora: Six Questionable Assumptions," *JJS* 33 (1982) 455ff.; Tina Pippin, *Death and Desire: The Rhetoric of Gender in the Apocalypse of John* (Louisville: Knox, 1992); Paul Duff, "Wolves in Sheep's Clothing: Literary Opposition and Social Tension in the Revelation of John" in *Reading the Book of Revelation*; J. W. Marshall, "Collateral Damage: Jesus and Jezebel in the Jewish War," in *Violence in the New Testament* (ed. Shelly Matthews and E. Leigh Gibson; New York: T&T Clark, 2005) 35–49.

⁷ See n. 6; also Paul Duff, "'The Synagogue of Satan': Crisis Mongering and the Apocalypse of John," unpublished paper graciously sent by the author, used by his permission; for earlier discussion, see Adela Yarbro Collins, "Vilification and Self-Definition in the Book of Revelation," *HTR*

tion, we cannot claim to resolve it here; instead, we only make some observations about the discussion.

Traditionally, of course, most commentators have assumed that this polemic is not about insiders at all; instead, it refers to Jews hostile to Christians. So our answer to this question has much to do with the question now engaging heated discussion, of how we envision these Asian groups of Jesus' followers at the end of the first century and, in particular, what we assume about boundaries between Jews and Christians. For the purpose of this article, I agree with those who point out that John, like other Jews devoted to Jesus Christ among his first-century followers, sees himself and his fellows not as Christians but as Jews (Paul, of course, called himself an "Israelite")—the "holy ones" who await the return of God's messiah. If John does know the term "Christian," he does not use it, much less apply it to himself, perhaps because, as we shall see, those who coined and used the term in late-first- and early-second-century Asia most often applied it to Gentile converts.

Third, I suggest that we may find some help understanding John's specific concerns with "intimate enemies" when we compare his vision of these Asian assemblies with that of Ignatius, who wrote letters to groups in some of the same towns John had addressed about ten years later. This Syrian believer who called himself "bishop of Antioch," a devoted follower of Paul, was the first, so far as we know, to insist that only those who are called "Christians" truly belong to God. In contrast to John, Ignatius is the first to demand that Jesus' followers preach, in his words, only "Christianity—not Judaism."

To address these issues, we begin by asking: what do John's characterizations of evil powers show about the way John sees himself and his fellow saints in relation to specific "enemies on the ground"—both inside and outside of his group? What do his prophetic visions suggest about his own situation and that of those with whom—and against whom—he identifies? For, in Peter Brown's apt phrase, John and his fellow believers see the story of the fallen angels, like the stories of the archaic chaos dragon, "not as a myth, but as a map on which they plotted the disruptions and tensions of the world around them."⁸ As is well known, John follows tradition when he identifies Israel's "outside" enemies, whom he sees embodied in the Roman forces, as "the great dragon" and his two allies, the "beast from the sea" and the "beast from the land."

To appreciate the impact of John's revisionism, let us briefly recall how the gospel writers characterize the cosmic war they see manifest in Jesus' execution. As noted above, in two previous articles I have shown that the New Testament evangelists chose to deal with the question of who embodied evil forces by drawing upon and amplifying, in varying ways, a handful of biblical stories that came to be associated with "the *satan*"—an angelic being who defected, so to speak, to the

(1986) 308–20; see also Shaye J. D. Cohen, "Judaism without Circumcision and 'Judaism' without 'Circumcision' in Ignatius," *HTR* 95:4 (2002) 395–415.

⁸ *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982) 24.

dark side. Genesis 6, for example, tells how the angelic “sons of God,” seduced by the beauty of human women, descended to earth where they spawned heroes and warriors, half angel and half human—what the Greeks would call demigods—but who, later commentators declared, generated, in turn, demonic powers and evil spirits.⁹ The famous folktale in Numbers 22 tells how the foreign prophet Balaam found his way blocked on a journey by an angelic figure, whose obstructiveness hints at his association with “the *satan*” (note that the Hebrew noun that describes him, שָׂטָן, suggests his adversarial role). John of Patmos draws upon this same story to derisively suggest that some insiders follow the teaching of “Balaam,” a false prophet whose notorious name suggests that he is a “deceiver of the people.”¹⁰ Followers of Jesus later connected these passages with others that tell of an angelic accuser who stands before the Lord to accuse humans, a kind of “devil’s advocate” (Zech 3:1f.; Job 1–3), and with Isaiah’s account (14:7ff) of the luminous heavenly being called “day star, son of the dawn,” who, having defied his commander in chief, was cast out of heaven, demoted, and disgraced—a passage that apparently inspired Revelation 12—and, over a thousand and five hundred years later, inspired Milton’s account of Satan’s fall in *Paradise Lost*.¹¹

In the first article cited above, we noted that the Satan traditions flowered especially in Jewish pseudepigraphic sources from c. 165 B.C.E. to 200 C.E., finding their deepest resonances among certain groups of so-called “dissident Jews” ranging from the Qumran sectarians to followers of Jesus of Nazareth. The authors of such works as *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees* amplified and retold such biblical stories of fallen angels to tell how the angelic “watchers,” often called “sons of God,” and leaders in the angelic army rebelled against God and finally became his enemies. Thus, we suggested, members of certain sectarian Jewish groups adapted such stories to characterize their own situation—above all to interpret their own marginal status, and the apostasy with which they charged the majority of God’s holy people. Thus they could explain that just as God’s own angels once turned against their commander in chief, so now many of his own people have turned against their God. The moral of the story is that even Israelites, although they are called God’s own “sons,” they, like the angels themselves, could fall from their rightful place to become, in effect, his enemies—and thus enemies of the “remnant” who remained faithful to God—who, such sectarians explained, in this case were themselves.

⁹ *1 Enoch* 6–16; *Jubilees* 5:3; 10:1–14, passim. For discussion, see my “The Social History of Satan,” part 1; for more detailed discussion, see Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

¹⁰ Revelation 2:14; J. Braverman, “Balaam in Rabbinic and Early Christian Traditions,” in *Sefer ha-yovel li-khevod Doktor Yehoshu’a Finkel* (ed. Sidney B. Hoenig and Leon D. Stitskin; New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1974) 41–50; J. T. Greene, “Balaam: Prophet, Diviner, and Priest in Selected Ancient Israelite and Hellenistic Jewish Sources,” in *SBLSP* (1989) 57–106; and see the detailed discussion in Aune, *Revelation*, vol. 1, 185–88.

¹¹ For discussion, see Forsyth, *The Old Enemy*, 105–81.

At first it may seem strange—if not absurd—that the authors of Matthew, Mark, and John sought to blame other Jews for Jesus' death, since it was well known, of course, that Jesus had been sentenced by the Roman governor, and executed by his soldiers on charges of sedition against Rome. Had these evangelists chosen to follow the well-known prophetic tropes they found in the writings of Isaiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel, they could have told the story of Jesus' death in a far more traditional—and historically plausible—way. They might have told it instead as the story of a righteous man like Daniel, sentenced to death by "the nations," Israel's hated foreign oppressors. Had they done so, they probably would have characterized the powers of evil as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel had, by retelling stories of Yahweh's battle with the dragon, who embodies the monstrous power of evil—a dragon associated with the sea, the primordial chaos—and thus with Israel's foreign oppressors.

Surprisingly, however, the evangelists ignored such familiar tropes and drew instead upon the far more peripheral Satan traditions, in order to make the astonishing claim that although Romans crucified Jesus, it was his Jewish enemies who actually killed him; Luke and John go so far as to identify these diabolical powers explicitly with those they see as Jesus' Jewish enemies.¹²

When I asked for what reasons they told the story as they did, I recognized that they did so primarily as a defensive tactic. Writing in the shattering aftermath of the failed Jewish war, themselves known to be followers of a man convicted of sedition against Rome, Jesus' followers fell under suspicion on the same charge. In that dangerous situation, they apparently hoped to deflect outsiders' suspicion and hostility by telling the story of their leader's death in a way calculated to show that even the Roman procurator found Jesus innocent of sedition—and to imply the innocence of the rest of his followers. Thus they chose to tell the story of Jesus' death in a way that showed the Romans treating Jesus in the historically implausible, but fair-minded and respectful, way that his followers hoped to be treated themselves, should they come to trial. Luke and Matthew both insist that Pilate not only repeatedly declared Jesus innocent, but resolved several times to release him—before giving in to a shouting mob of hostile Jews.

When we turn to John's Revelation, however, we see at once that John of Patmos makes no such defensive moves. While sharing the evangelists' conviction of Jesus' innocence, John makes no attempt to placate Gentile fears and suspicions. Instead of the apologetic charge Luke has Peter address to the "men of Israel" ("you killed the righteous one, and delivered him into the hands of lawless men," Acts 2:23), the author of Revelation clearly indicts Roman forces, whom he sees as the ominous shadow government for those who actually wield power—namely, the supernatural forces of evil that he depicts as the "great dragon" and his allies.

Yet hostility toward "the nations" need not—and often does not—preclude hostility toward those identified as "intimate enemies." For while the author of

¹² For citations and discussion, see my "Social History of Satan, Part 2,"

Revelation takes as his dominant theme how monstrous evil powers “war against God,” he simultaneously weaves into his narrative the second, more minor theme, showing how fallen angels challenge—and impersonate—divine power, and how, at the same time, intimate enemies infiltrate God’s people.

For while the prophet says that Jesus “hates” these false insiders, he never makes any charge against them so harsh as the one that dominates the passion narratives—the charge that Jews themselves engineered Jesus’ arrest, passion, and death. Instead, John of Patmos adopts the prophets’ traditional view: that foreign enemies—in this case, the Romans—had slaughtered the “lamb of God.” John of Patmos leaves no doubt that those guilty of killing Jesus, as well as his witness Antipas, and the other martyrs John saw in heaven (“those who had been slaughtered for the word of God,” 6:9) are those whom he, following Isaiah, calls “the inhabitants of the earth” (Isa 26:21).

When John conflates Leviathan with Satan, as we noted, he wants to show that the powers of evil have grown more powerful than ever, now having taken not one, but two quite different manifestations—both, however, working toward the same end. In a moment we will ask who John believes these enemies are, but first let us note how ingeniously he relates what he sees as the practical effect of this unprecedented—and unholy—alliance.

John proceeds to tell how the dragon, having united in himself all the forces of evil, now cast out of heaven and raging with fury, “went off to make war” upon “those who keep the commandments of God and hold the witness of Jesus” (13:17). To do so, he takes his stand on the seashore and manifests himself first as the “beast rising from the sea,” who combines within one monstrous form the characteristics that Daniel had ascribed to the four beasts who manifest four foreign empires. Now, John says, the “beast from the sea” wields the dragon’s irresistible “power, and . . . throne, and great authority” (13:2).

When John goes on to describe the dragon’s second manifestation, his innovations are even more evident. For John goes on to say that “then I saw another beast that rose out of the earth; it had two horns like a lamb, and it spoke like a dragon” (13:11). Thus this form of evil power bears some resemblance to the “lamb”—Jesus the messiah, the “son of man coming with the clouds of heaven,” whom John, like Daniel, sees as the antitype of the “beast from the sea”¹³—but it speaks “like a dragon.” What this beast does is promote the authority of the first, by making them bow down to worship its image and by forcing everyone to bear the mark of the beast. Although John, like most of his contemporaries, does not definitively separate

¹³ Adela Yarbro Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), in her influential study suggests that this image refers in particular to wealthy or noble Asians who supported the imperial cult; Simon Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) 101ff; Leonard L. Thompson, *The Book of Revelation: Apocalypse and Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); see also the fine discussion in Steven J. Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John: Reading Revelation Among the Ruins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) 25–131.

military and political power from religious authority, he pictures the “beast from the sea” above all as the active evil energy that wields and manipulates “signs and wonders,” images, symbols of submission, and its secret identifying number.¹⁴

No wonder, then, that as John’s narrative proceeds to the final battle—the Word of God leading his armies into battle against the combined forces of the evil powers—he calls this beast from the land “the false prophet.” So, although John says that the “beast from the land” is actually a second manifestation of the dragon, he wields powers traditionally associated with Satan—inverting the powers of God’s messiah, and deceiving people into worshipping that which is evil. Thus John’s portrait of this multiform diabolical usurper is meant to demonstrate how “intimate enemies” are now secretly collaborating with openly hostile outsiders. Christians in later generations, sensing these connections, would conflate John’s account of this “beast” and “false prophet” with warnings found in the Johannine letters against the coming “antichrist.”

Intricate as is John’s narrative, what he conveys by conflating this powerful imagery speaks clearly to many readers. One message it communicates is that, evil as are the powers that rule the earth, “intimate enemies” are even more dangerous, since some of them, like the beast from the earth, are actually undercover agents working for “the dragon.” As Paul Duff has shown from a somewhat different perspective, one of John’s primary concerns is to unmask these intimate enemies.¹⁵

■ The Identity of the “Intimate Enemies”

As noted above, the identity of the alien enemies is not in doubt. Besides the well known association of the dragon with Israel’s traditional foes, few readers could miss the allusions to the Roman empire and its rulers behind John’s caustic portrait of the rich and decadent city of “Babylon” enthroned on seven hills beside a river. Probably some in his audience knew, too, that other contemporary Jewish writers also called Rome “Babylon,” since the Romans had destroyed the second temple as the Babylonians had destroyed and desecrated the first. And while many have puzzled the riddling “number of the beast,” virtually all recognize that it signifies, one way or another, an imperial name.¹⁶

More complicated—and more contested—is who John has in mind when he castigates the intimate enemies whom he implicates along with the “false prophet” and charges with deflecting worship away from God. First of all, I agree with the scholarly consensus, recently well articulated by Steven Friesen, that shows that John associates the “false prophet” with the religious ideology of the Roman empire—perhaps especially, as Adela Yarbro Collins has suggested, with officials

¹⁴ See especially Richard Bauckham’s enormously helpful discussion in *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (New York: T&T Clark, 1993) 384–452.

¹⁵ *Who Rides the Beast?* 31–125; Leonard Thompson, *The Book of Revelation*, passim.

¹⁶ Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 384–452.

promoting the imperial cult.¹⁷ Second, and more ambiguously, John goes on to implicate certain groups of Jesus' followers, suggesting that these, although ostensibly worshipping God and his Messiah, actually deceive people into worshipping that which is evil—which means for John that covertly they lend their support to the demonic powers that lurk behind Rome's gods and rulers.

Can we understand whom John has in mind when he castigates insiders? We recall that after opening his "revelation" with a stunning vision of "one like a son of man," John says that this radiant being entrusted him with messages directed to "the seven assemblies (ἐκκλησίαι) of Asia" (1:1–11). John addresses the members of these tiny Asian assemblies as "kings and priests of God" βασιλείαν ἱερεῖς τῷ θεῷ (1:5–6), echoing the famous words Moses first addressed to God's people Israel at Sinai (cf. Exodus 19:6; Greek: βασιλείαν ἱερὸν, the Septuagint translation for מְלִיכָהּ כֹהֲנֵיהֶם). Yet John's Jesus warns that nearly all of these assemblies contain a mixed group, some of whom he praises, others whom he "hates," and some, apparently, in the middle.¹⁸ Since "Jesus" addresses these messages to "God's holy ones" to sort out who actually does belong among them and who does not, it we are not surprised to find that these messages contain the densest concentration of allusions to Satan in the entire book.

While weaving together threats from the inside and from the outside, the prophet's warnings suggest that he regards evil insiders as the most dangerous of all. Thus his letters to the seven assemblies open as "Jesus" praises those in Ephesus because, he says, "you cannot tolerate evildoers" who "say that they are apostles and are not" (2:2). He praises them because they have tested—and rejected—these false apostles, and because "you hate the works of the Nicolitains, which I also hate" (1:6). When John addresses those in Smyrna, where arrests occurred, and those in Pergamon, where one "witness" was killed, the prophet makes sure they know that outside threats, too, come from the Evil One: thus Jesus warns the former that "the devil is about to throw some of you in prison" and reminds the latter that they live "where Satan lives," apparently referring to the great temple to Zeus or the imperial temple to the *augusti*, "where Satan's throne is" (2:13).¹⁹

John unleashes an even more vehement denunciation upon a rival leader in Thyatira, who "says she is a prophet," but whom he calls "Jezebel," and accuses of "teaching and seducing my servants to practice fornication and to eat food sacrificed to idols." Shortly before, addressing those in Pergamon, John had accused some people of accepting "the teaching of Balaam," that, he says, encourages the same practices. Of course, the term πορνεία has a long history in prophetic literature that suggests consorting with foreign culture and flirting, so to speak, with foreign

¹⁷ Steven J. Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John*; Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis*, 72–107.

¹⁸ Duff makes this point well. For example: "The group we might call 'the invisible majority' is 'the group that represents John's primary audience.'" *Who Rides the Beast*, 48.

¹⁹ See Aune, *Revelation* 1–5, 52A, 182–84; Price, *Rituals and Power*, 133–48; Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Revelation of John*, 27–32, 107–29.

gods. Finally, as John addresses the two assemblies in Smyrna and Philadelphia, which Duff identifies specifically as “strongholds of John’s loyalists,”²⁰ he bitterly denounces those who “say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan” (2:9), and who “are lying” (3:9).

We can see, then, that every one of John’s accusations against these various enemies charges that they are subverting God’s people internally. Above all, like members of the “synagogue of Satan,” some, apparently, pretend to be God’s people while actually being Satan’s agents. Such charges, as is well known, are familiar among such dissidents as the Qumran sectaries, who apply them to those they regard as apostate.²¹

While earlier generations of scholars scrutinized John’s rhetoric to delineate specific groups among these detested insiders, more recently, commentators have recognized that at least several of the groups he describes are more likely to be variations on a composite portrait. Many now tend to agree, at least in general, with the scenario described in detail by Paul Duff: that when John indicts the three groups mentioned above, he is challenging followers of Jesus who accommodate more to outside culture than this rigorist prophet would allow—in particular, those who follow Pauline teaching. For when we discount John’s polemical vehemence, we can see that the specific accommodations condoned by those he denounces as “false apostles” and “false prophets” look very much like the practices Paul allows to his converts in 1 Corinthians 7–10: eating meat sacrificed to idols, and allowing sexual practices that rigorously observant Jews often prohibited, such as marriage to outsiders.²² I agree with Collins, Duff, and others that John’s target includes followers of Jesus who accept Pauline teaching—teaching already widespread in Asia Minor, especially among Gentiles.

More difficult, however, and more debated is whether those whom John denounces in Smyrna and Philadelphia, who “say they are Jews, and are not—but a synagogue of Satan” (2:9; 3:9), are to be grouped with the others addressed in such a composite portrait. Are we to take John at his word and assume that these people are not Jews, but Gentiles—presumably followers of Jesus—who “say they are Jews, and are not, but are lying” (3:9)? Or are they, as Collins, Duff, and others have assumed, actually not only Jews, like John himself, but outsiders hostile to the Jesus movement?²³ Recently David Frankfurter, taking up and modifying what

²⁰ Duff, *Who Rides the Beast*, 48.

²¹ For discussion, see my “The Social History of Satan, Part I.”

²² Many scholars have observed this connection. For a recent example, see Duff, *Who Rides the Beast*, 48–60; for more specific suggestions about the practices that may be involved, see Frankfurter, “Jews or Not?”

²³ See, for example, Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis*: “These comments (Rev 2:9 and 3:9) imply great hostility between at least some Christians and Jews of Asia Minor. At the same time, the author of Revelation, *perhaps along with other Christians* also, claimed the name ‘Jew’ for *himself and his fellow Christians*,” 75; “The name ‘Jews’ is denied to the Jewish community in Smyrna,” 85. See also Aune: “[Rev 2:9] implies that Christians are the true Israel,” which Aune characterizes as

Ferdinand C. Baur and other members of the Tübingen School suggested over a hundred years ago,²⁴ has argued that these, like the other insiders John censures, are predominantly Gentile followers of Jesus who anger John by claiming Israel's legacy while neglecting religious practices incumbent upon devout Jews.²⁵ Paul Duff, while rightly rejecting often restated tropes about Jewish persecution of Christians, which are based on anachronistic assumptions, recently has offered instead a detailed textual analysis for taking these as Jewish outsiders.²⁶

How we assess their views has much to do with how we envision the first century groups John has in mind. During past decades, most commentators have concluded, with Aune, Schüssler Fiorenza, and Collins, to mention a few, that when speaking of "those who say they are Jews and are not," John is drawing a line between himself and his fellow believers on the one hand and non-Christian Jews in Smyrna and Philadelphia on the other. Many take this as indicating "the parting of the ways;" most have shared the assumption, restated by Paul Duff in his book, that "Judaism and Christianity would probably have been separated by this time."²⁷ David Aune speaks for many, too, when he characterizes John as a "Jewish-Christian prophet who had moved from Judaism to Christianity at some point in his career."²⁸ Both Aune and Collins have expressed the widely shared view that John "denies the term *Jew* to actual Jews of the local synagogues," most likely because they participated in hostile acts against Christians. Both conclude that John, consequently, denies them the name "Jews," because he holds that "followers of Jesus are . . . the true Jews," which Aune characterizes as "a widespread Christian view."²⁹ Aune's view of John's evolution from "Jew" to "Christian" gives rise to his theory of two editions of the Apocalypse that account for what Aune interprets as the author's psychological and theological "development," one that conveniently recapitulates what Christians typically have seen as a progression from Judaism to Christianity.³⁰

Yet this kind of interpretation projects onto John's autobiography, as onto the first century Asian groups he addresses, what Christians in later generations came to see as the course of salvation history. But when we step back from this

"a widespread Christian view"—as evidence for which he cites passages from Pauline and Petrine letters, along with the gospel of John. *Revelation 1–5*, 175.

²⁴ See Ferdinand C. Baur, *Vorlesungen über neutestamentliche Theologie* (Leipzig: Fues, 1864) 207–30; Gustav Volkmar, *Commentar zur Offenbarung Johannes* (Zürich: Drell, 1862) 80–85.

²⁵ Frankfurter, "Jews or Not?" 403–12.

²⁶ "The Synagogue of Satan": Crisis Mongering and the Apocalypse of John," unpublished paper used by the author's permission, just now published in *The Reality of Revelation* (ed. David L. Barr).

²⁷ Duff, *Who Rides the Beast*, 52; on the supposed "parting of the ways" between Jews and Christians, see, for example, Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis*, 84–87.

²⁸ Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, cxxi.

²⁹ For reference, see above, n. 23.

³⁰ Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, cxx–cxxxiv. For a more current and much more nuanced critical discussion, see Frankfurter, "Jews or Not?" and Cohen, "Judaism without Circumcision."

interpretation and attempt to read what John says in the context of first century history—before the invention of “Christianity,” so to speak—we can see that what John writes does not support this view. Instead, as Aune acknowledges, “one of the striking features of Revelation is the virtual absence of the typical features of the polemic between Jews and Christians . . . and an absence of the threat of Judaizing.”³¹ But Aune somehow takes this as evidence that the prophet himself stands firmly within the “Christian” camp—and goes so far as to conclude that the absence of warnings against “Judaizing” indicates that the seer “espoused a ‘Pauline’ type of inclusivism.”³²

In this paper, I tend to agree with—and extend—the views of those whose research has led to a very different conclusion: that far from “espousing a kind of ‘Pauline’ inclusivism,” John here again excoriates the groups that do—groups that apparently consist largely of Gentile converts who follow Pauline and neo-Pauline teaching. Especially during the past ten years, many of us have recognized that the traditional discussion often has turned upon anachronistic use of the terms “Jew” and “Christian.” For if, indeed, John knows the term “Christian,” he never uses it—and certainly never applies it to himself or those of whom he approves—apparently because, as Philippa Townsend has persuasively shown, the term, adapted from a self-designation current among groups of Paul’s Gentile converts who followed Paul’s lead and called themselves οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, probably was coined by Roman magistrates to refer in particular to Gentile converts.³³ While we can only sketch her argument here, we note that the author of Luke-Acts associates the first use of the term with Paul and Barnabas’s mission to Gentiles in Antioch (Acts 11:26) and that governor Pliny also uses it apparently to designate Gentiles who have made themselves conspicuous by joining those who “pray to Jesus as a God.”³⁴ Perhaps it is no accident that Ignatius, himself a Syrian convert writing perhaps ten years after John (depending on how we date his writing) to believers in several of the same Asian towns, is the first, so far as we know, to aggressively identify himself and his fellow believers as “Christians” over against what he sees as the adherents of an inferior and obsolete “Judaism.”

Furthermore, while we have no indication that John thinks of himself as a “Christian,” we have noted that he strongly identifies himself in *positive* terms as a Jew, specifically as one whose concern with the holiness and purity of God’s people impels him to advocate certain practices and abominate others. Intriguingly, within about a generation of his writing, some of John’s earliest commentators assumed that those whom John attacks largely consist of Gentile converts; thus Irenaeus (and later Hippolytus, following his lead) associates those whom the seer

³¹ Ibid, 165.

³² Ibid.

³³ Philippa Townsend, “Who Were the *Christianioi*?” Paper submitted to Princeton Seminar, 2004; forthcoming publication; used by author’s permission.

³⁴ Pliny, *Letter to Trajan*.

calls “Nicolitains” with the figure of Nicolaus, described in the book of Acts as a Gentile proselyte from Syria.³⁵

But were they wrong? Paul Duff recently has argued that the structure of the letters to Smyrna and Philadelphia, which are, in his words, “strongholds of John’s supporters,” shows that they lack the structure common to John’s correspondence to insiders. The latter, Duff says,

... include both a call for repentance (aimed at some or all of the church members) and a threat from the risen Jesus (directed against the recipients of the letter) if that repentance does not occur. The latter set, on the other hand, includes neither of these elements.³⁶

Duff makes some incisive points about style. Yet an addressee of either of these letters could hardly avoid hearing “Jesus”’ bitter denunciation of “Satan’s synagogue” as a serious warning. Who among the group John denounces could miss his threat that when the Son of Man comes back—very soon!—he will put such wrongdoers in their place, humiliating them so that they will have to “bow down” before God’s own people?

If, on the other hand, John’s Jesus here addresses Gentile converts, the punishment Jesus threatens would precisely fit the crime against Jews of which such converts apparently were often guilty. Paul himself, writing forty years before John, admits that he had found such attitudes widespread among his own followers, and he repeatedly chastises them for “boasting” of their superiority to “Israelites.” Yet Paul acknowledges that many Gentile converts have taken his own words as encouragement to think of themselves as being, spiritually speaking, the *real* Jews. Many could have taken that to be his meaning when, for example, in his letter to the Romans he speaks of who the “real Jews” are:

For he is not a Jew, who is one externally, nor is circumcision what is external in the flesh; but a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is in the heart, spiritual, not literal. (Rom 2:28–29)

In the same letter, of course, Paul goes on to say that he grieves continually for “my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites,” since, as he explains, “not all who are from Israel are Israel; not all who are the seed of Abraham are his children,”—for “it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise” (9:1–8). In his letter to the Galatians, he assures Gentile converts there that “if you belong to Christ, you are Abraham’s seed, heirs according to the promise,” children of Sarah, “born according to the spirit;” thus, he admonishes his hearers, “you are children of the promise, like Isaac” (Gal 3:1–4:28). Concluding this letter, Paul proclaims the blessing of peace upon all who belong, he says, to “the Israel of God” (6:16). Finally, when Paul writes to

³⁵ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.26.3; 3.10.7.

³⁶ Duff, ““The Synagogue of Satan,”” 11.

converts in Corinth, he compares their experience—favorably—to that of “Israel according to the flesh” (1 Cor 10:18).³⁷

Paul’s letters, along with the various supercessionist views expressed in such writings as the letter to the Hebrews and the gospel of John, show how widespread such views had become, even around the end of the first century. We need not, then, indulge in elaborate speculation, as scholars often have, about what these “would-be Jews” had done to anger John. For while neglecting the very practices that John believes keep God’s people holy—observing the commandments and strictly maintaining purity—these Gentile converts dare not only to “say they are Jews” when they are not, but even to boast of their superiority. If they have, indeed, “blasphemed” by imagining that God no longer loves his people, no wonder the prophet longs for the day when Jesus will come to punish them in a way that perfectly fits their crime:

I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but are lying—I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.

This reading tends to support Frankfurter’s observation that:

scholars who have cast John of Patmos as a Christian, as opposed to a Jew, distort his text and obscure a proper understanding of his relationship to Jews who were not devoted to Jesus. “Christian” would imply that his Jesus devotion somehow displaces or preempts his Jewishness.³⁸

While we may not be able to solve entirely the problem of whom John addresses in Rev 2:9 and 3:9, for our present purpose, we need not do so. In any case, Frankfurter makes a perceptive point when he says that for observant Jewish followers of Jesus like John, “the term ‘Christian,’ of course, is the least useful label, either for denoting separation from Jews as a taxonomic category, or for denoting ancient religious self-definition.”³⁹

In regard to John of Patmos, we agree. Yet this comment raises another question noted earlier: when, and for whom, did “Christian” become not the *least* but the *most* useful label, even a *necessary* one? This question points us toward one obvious source: the famous letters written about a decade after John wrote Revelation by Ignatius, bishop of Antioch. It is hard to know what to make of the famous statement we noted from the book of Acts that “the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.” Yet we cannot help noting that some twenty or thirty years after Luke wrote these words, Ignatius, who calls himself “bishop of Antioch,” is the

³⁷ See the incisive discussion by Daniel Boyarin in *Carnal Israel: Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); and note the “politically corrected” translation now found in the NRSV translation of this passage. See also the important discussion by Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation*, 114–34.

³⁸ “Jews or Not?” 408.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

first, so far as we know, not only to insist on calling himself “Christian,” but also to define what he calls “Christianity” to separate his own stand from what he calls “Judaism.” At the same time, Ignatius insists on separating himself and his fellow “Christians” from Jesus followers who, like John, both apparently *are* Jews and proudly claim the name. Like John, of course, Ignatius wrote seven extant letters to groups of Jesus followers in Asia Minor, including groups in three of the same Asian towns that John had addressed, directing them to those whom he, of course, does call Christians—and, as noted above, the term as he uses it specifically denotes Gentile converts.

■ John and Ignatius: Early Diversity Among Followers of Jesus

Let us compare, then, the rhetorical strategies of John of Patmos and Ignatius of Antioch as each of these two intense, passionate polemicists attempts to circumscribe the boundary of “God’s people” against “others” who, each charges, falsely claim a place within that magic circle. Of course we need not assume that the two were in direct communication, or even that Ignatius knew of John’s writing, separated as they were by over a decade and by the distance between Syria and the regional towns near Ephesus in Asia. Yet Christine Trevett finds in Ignatius’s writing evidence to show not only that he was familiar with John’s writing, but that he intended certain passages of his own letters to Jesus’ followers in Philadelphia to challenge some of John’s claims and teachings.⁴⁰ And while keeping in mind that the evidence is too dense and complex to allow us to characterize their respective standpoints as if they were simply diametric opposites—for we acknowledge, indeed, that various groups of Jesus’ followers coexisted, and sometimes competed, in Asia Minor at the turn of the first century—the contrasts are intriguing.

In the first place, while Ignatius seems to be responding to similar issues, his perception of the ἐκκλησίαι he addresses differs sharply from John’s. As we noted, John apparently identifies himself not only as a prophet but also as a priest who stands among a “kingdom of priests,” perhaps intending to characterize the whole community of “holy ones” (or, at least, the men among them) as, in effect, a group of priests—words that, as noted above, echo Exod 19:6, in which the Lord addresses the Israelites through Moses, saying, “You shall be for me a kingdom of priests”

⁴⁰ Christine Trevett, *Montanism: Gender, Authority, and the New Prophecy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); “Apocalypse, Ignatius, Montanism: Seeking the Seeds,” VC 43 (1989) 313–38. See also Henning Paulson, *Studien zur Theologie des Ignatius von Antiochien* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978); William R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985). On Ignatius’s view of apostles, see also Charles E. Hill, “Ignatius and the Apostolate: The Witness of Ignatius to the Emergence of Christian Scripture,” in *Studia Patristica: Papers presented at the Thirteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford, 1999* (ed. Maurice F. Miles and Edward J. Yarnold; StPatr 36; Leuven: Peeters, 2001) 226–48. Hill observes, for example, that Ignatius’s letters “place the apostles beyond the merely exemplary. The apostles are a definite and closed group which participates in an astonishing triumvirate with Jesus Christ and the Father representing divine authority” (233).

(וְאַתָּם תִּהְיוּ לִי מִמְלַכֶּת כְּהֹנִים). John envisions each group of saints standing under the leadership of a protecting angel, to whom is entrusted divine revelation mediated through prophets like John. But when it comes to human leaders, John recognizes above all prophets like himself. Despite his elaborately phrased modesty about his own prophetic role, the prayer of the twenty four elders in heaven indicates that he regards the prophets as leaders of the “holy ones,” that is, members of the congregations they address (2:20; 10:7; 16:6; 8:24; 22:6; 22:9). Furthermore, as we have seen, John reserves his bitterest invective for the two prophets he denounces as false—perhaps, as we have seen, because the practical teaching of both these “false prophets” echoes that of Paul, and perhaps because one is female.⁴¹

John regards apostles quite differently from Paul—and, as we shall see, very differently from Ignatius, who takes Paul as the primary model for his own life. Occasionally John mentions apostles with some respect—but only those who are dead and safely enshrined in past tradition. Thus John envisions apostles in heaven, praising God’s judgment along with the saints and prophets who are already there. But when he designates specific apostles, he mentions only those he calls “the twelve apostles” (21:14) whom Jesus chose, whose names he envisions inscribed upon the foundations of the twelve gates of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Yet among his contemporaries, John seems to regard “apostles” only with suspicion. Thus the Jesus he channels opens his first address to the Ephesians praising those who, in his words, “do not tolerate evildoers,” which means, he explains, that “you have tested those who call themselves apostles, but are not, and you found them to be false” (2:2). Did John have in mind, among others, the most famous self-professed apostle, Paul—one whom John never mentions (if, indeed, he knew of him) but whom others among his near contemporaries in Asia called simply “the great apostle”⁴² and revered even above “the twelve?” Paul himself says, of course, that his missionary work was dogged by charges that he falsely claimed to be an apostle. Note, too, that when Paul himself enumerates those divinely gifted for leadership among the churches, he ranks apostles and prophets in reverse order from John: “God has appointed in the churches first apostles, second prophets, third teachers” (1 Corinthians 12:28). Paul’s own letters indicate, of course, that “apostles” were prevalent among his groups, and Ignatius, some sixty years later, acknowledges among Pauline groups not only “apostles,” but also bishops, presbyters, and deacons.

Not surprisingly, then, Ignatius envisions apostles, not prophets, standing as the primary leaders of his churches. Thus Ignatius gives advice to the groups he

⁴¹ Tina Pippin, on the basis of her reading of certain passages in Revelation, claims that John regards only males as members of God’s holy community; see “The Heroine and the Whore: Fantasy and the Female in the Apocalypse of John,” in *Semeia* 60 (1992) 67–82. While I do not find her reading persuasive, I tend to take John’s reference of the holy ones as a “kingdom of priests” as indicating that, as often happens, men form the essential and holy center—and in all likelihood, the only legitimate leaders—of God’s people.

⁴² See, for example, “The Hypostasis of the Archons,” in *NHL* 87:4–5.

addresses that is the reverse of John's: Test prophets, not apostles. Although he does not deny that there are some prophets among Jesus' followers—as we shall see, his *Letter to the Philadelphians* shows that he knows how highly many revered them, perhaps especially in Asia Minor—Ignatius apparently follows the view expressed in Luke-Acts that bishops, understood as latter-day agents of the apostles, now hold the essential leadership role in the churches (Acts 20:17–38). Ignatius, of course, takes the suggestions made in Acts 20 to a far more radical and systematic conclusion. Not only does he identify himself as the sole authentic leader of Jesus' followers in Antioch, but he insists that every genuine ἐκκλησία must have a bishop, like himself, as leader. “Without the bishop, nothing can be called an ἐκκλησία”⁴³—fighting words, one would imagine, when resonating among groups whose members agreed with John that their assembly was divinely guided by an angel who gives divine direction through prophets. And should such prophets have taught, as John had, that all members of God's people are priests, Ignatius apparently felt compelled to set them straight.

For when Ignatius writes to the ἐκκλησία at Philadelphia, where only ten to fifteen years before, John of Patmos had written to “a stronghold of (his) loyalists” who lived there, Ignatius at first treads carefully. When he takes up the question of the roles of priest and prophet, far from metaphorically characterizing all of God's people as priests, as John had, Ignatius defines “priests” as church functionaries specifically authorized and assigned to the second rank of leadership, below the bishop and above the deacons. Thus he defines them as three formal ranks belonging to the κληρος, “clergy,” by contrast with what he calls the “laity” (λαός, the “people”).⁴⁴ After admonishing Jesus' followers to obey the bishops, priests, and deacons, Ignatius adds what sounds like a pointed concession: “and also let us love the prophets, because they anticipated the gospel in their preaching, and hoped for and awaited him, and were saved by believing on him.”⁴⁵ What John of Patmos had implied about apostles—that the only authoritative ones are people of the past—Ignatius now implies about prophets: those who are genuine are, above all, the classical prophets, long dead and sanctioned by tradition.

Yet Ignatius seems to have known that many prophets had been active in Philadelphia, including the four daughters of the apostle Philip, all of them prophets, and the famous woman prophet Ammia, who was active there from around John's time to his own. Apparently because he recognizes Philadelphia's strong tradition of prophetic teaching, when he writes to believers there, Ignatius refrains from challenging their authority. Instead, far from deprecating present day prophets, Ignatius claims that while in Philadelphia he himself proved that he, too, could

⁴³ *Trall.* 3.1. For a fascinating recent discussion of Ignatius's view of episcopacy and church order, see Harry O. Mauer, “The Politics of the Silent Bishop: Silence and Persuasion in Ignatius of Antioch” in *JTS* (2004) 503–19.

⁴⁴ *Eph.* 1.3; 2.2; *Trall.* 1.1; 3.1; 81; *Mag.* 2.1.

⁴⁵ *Phld.* 5.2.

speak as a prophet. Later, writing to believers there, he reminds them that while he was visiting Philadelphia, he had publicly demonstrated his own prophetic credentials: "I cried out when I was with you; I cried out in a loud voice—it was God's voice!" But what Ignatius says he spoke in prophecy turned out to be antithetical to a continuing and active prophetic tradition. Instead, it was what he preached all the time: "Pay attention to the bishop, and to the presbytery, and to the deacons!" Ignatius admits that some who heard him speak this "prophecy" objected, charging that rather than speaking by the spirit's inspiration, the bishop had said these things because he had been tipped off about dissenters among the Philadelphia group. But Ignatius vehemently denies the charge, and swears by God that

I did not learn this from any human source. It was the spirit that kept on proclaiming in these words: "Do nothing apart from the bishop . . . prize unity; flee schism; imitate Jesus Christ."⁴⁶

Despite his claim to speak as a prophet—and the unconventional message he delivered in that role—Ignatius rejects entirely the premise central to the teaching of John of Patmos, as well as many other prophets and their admirers in Asia among Jesus' followers, including the authors of *Didache* and the Gospel of Matthew. For each of these authors, in various ways, takes care to demonstrate that his "gospel"—the message of Jesus Christ, as each presents it—is grounded in classical prophecy. John's own oracles, as Prigeant observes, are "literally saturated" with allusions to the oracles of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zachariah,⁴⁷ as is the Gospel of Matthew and its predecessors. But Ignatius, on the contrary, hardly ever refers to what he calls the ἀρχαῖα—that is, to texts from the Hebrew Bible. On the contrary, he insists that what is primary is the gospel message and not the Hebrew Scriptures. Knowing his own stand to be controversial, he describes the opposing arguments to those in Philadelphia:

I have heard some people say, "If I don't find it in the ἀρχαῖα, I do not believe in the gospel." And when I say to them, "but it is written," they retorted, "that is precisely the issue." But he?? me, the ἀρχαῖα are Jesus, and the inviolable ἀρχαῖα are his cross, his death, his resurrection, and the faith that is through him.⁴⁸

Instead of founding his faith upon the testimonies of the Hebrew Bible, as others do, Ignatius declares that he founds it upon what Paul says are the elementary themes of his preaching (κήρυγμα), that is, "Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1

⁴⁶ Ibid., 7.1–2.

⁴⁷ Pierre Prigent, *L'Apocalypse de Saint Jean* (2d ed.; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1988) 41.

⁴⁸ *Phld.* 8.2. On the term εὐαγγέλιον, note the incisive discussion by Helmut Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990) 7–8; for another view, see J. P. Meier, "Matthew and Ignatius: A Response to William R. Schoedel," in *Social History of the Matthean Community* (ed. David L. Balch; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 178–86. Note, too, C. E. Hill's discussion of Ignatius on the authority of written sources, in "Ignatius and the Apostolate," 247–48.

Corinthians 2:2)—that is, “his cross, his death, his resurrection.” This, apparently, is what he means when he repeatedly insists that Jesus’ followers are to “eat only Christian food.” (Are we to infer, here, the eucharist, the “gospel” preaching, or both?) The bishop continues, “I plead with you, do nothing in strife, but according to Christ’s teaching.” What this means, and what matters most, is to focus on Christianity, not Judaism: “if anyone interprets Judaism to you, do not listen to him.”⁴⁹ As we might expect of one who helped coin and contrast these two terms, Ignatius does not claim for himself or for those with whom he identifies the term “Jew.” Although he regards himself as a participant in Israel—the “new Israel”—he insists on the clear superiority of “Christianity.” Against any like John, who is proud to understand himself a Jew, Ignatius declares that “whoever is not called by this name [Christian] is not of God!” As Townsend points out, Ignatius argues for a complete reversal of the historical relationship between Jewish tradition and the emerging sects of Jesus’ followers. “Not only must the *Christianoi* no longer orbit ‘Judaism,’ Jews who believe in Jesus must now adopt ‘Christianism’; they must become *Christians*.”⁵⁰ Thus Ignatius radically shifts the boundaries. Unlike John of Patmos or Matthew, who sought to demonstrate the truth about Jesus Christ from the Hebrew Bible, Ignatius goes so far as to accuse those who introduce Ἰουδαϊσμός of introducing αἵρεσις.

Yet even having repudiated “Judaism,” Ignatius goes on to claim that he and his fellow Christians have taken over the Jews’ identity as God’s people. Thus this Syrian convert can enjoin Jesus’ followers to “give no occasion to the ἔθνεσιν [that is, to the ‘nations,’ to Gentiles]” to slander God’s people. Thus he seems to assume that God has disenfranchised the Jews, and that he and his fellow Gentiles have become, in effect, Israel.

Let us state, then, our conclusion. First, we agree with the perspective of many colleagues who see John, that fervently Jewish follower of Jesus, attacking, as rival prophets and teachers, followers of Jesus in Asia who follow Pauline teaching. Second, in light of recent discussion of usages of the term Χριστιανοί, we agree that the latter probably consist primarily of Gentile converts. Third, we want to indicate how this picture fits into current discussion of the emergence of boundaries between “Jews” and “Christians,” and, in Ignatius’s words, between “Judaism” and “Christianity.” Finally, we want to show how John, by conflating two distinct biblical traditions characterizing evil powers—one involving “that old serpent,” the chaos dragon and his beastly allies, the other “the *satan*” and his angelic armies—intends to “out” those “insiders” whom he detests as, in effect, secret allies of the “outside” enemies who threaten and persecute God’s people.

⁴⁹ *Loc. cit.* 6.1

⁵⁰ Townsend, “Who were the *Christianoi*?” 18–21; note, too, the terminological discussion in Cohen, “Judaism without Circumcision,” 396–414.

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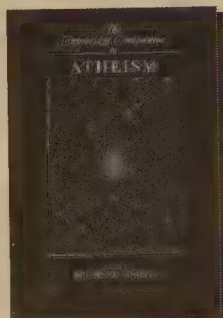
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